



HISTORY'S STRONGEST SENIOR BROTHER

BOOK 03

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EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

History's Strongest Senior Brother

(史上最强师兄)

by

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Synopsis

The first time Yan Zhaoge crossed worlds, he landed in a martial warrior civilization that was at the peak of prosperity. He ended up in the book storage building of the the Divine Palace, which collected and preserved the classics of the entire world from all fields of knowledge. However, a world class calamity struck soon after and even the Divine Palace was destroyed.

Yan Zhaoge's soul once again crossed over, but this time he arrived in the same world, except countless years have passed.

With his brain full of rare books and classics from the era of peak prosperity, Yan Zhaoge's second crossing over to the present era was like a gamer who was used to playing hell mode suddenly finding himself playing the game on easy.

That was just way too awesome.

But before that, he needs to fix a certain problem.

“I'm not a main character? In fact, I'm actually the main character's love rival and the antagonistic Mr. Perfect senior martial brother? This script is wrong!”

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Book 3 - Face of a Hero

HSSB 201: Remains From Before The Great Calamity

Generally speaking, this freedom to act was the highest privilege available only to Broad Creed Mountain's First Seat Elders.

Strictly speaking, some First Seat Elders didn't even have such a privilege, or rather only possessed it in some domains or some specific places.

For example, in the East Heaven Region, the East Elder possessed such a privilege, but outside of the East Heaven Region, he no longer possessed it.

In Broad Creed Mountain's history, there had yet to appear a First Seat Elder who was still a Martial Scholar. Therefore, there naturally hadn't been a Martial Scholar who had obtained such a privilege.

Yan Zhaoge could be considered unprecedented in this area.

This was his reward for having successfully broken the Devilish Domain Grand Formation, preventing the Nine Underworlds from descending.

From a certain perspective, this reward was not because Yan Zhaoge was a younger generation disciple, nor was it because of his outstanding talent in the martial dao.

This reward was actually an affirmation of Yan Zhaoge's abilities, an affirmation of his handling of various major incidents that had cropped up.

In some regards, this reward was also from Yan Zhaoge's accomplishments in the war of the Eastern Tang, the Giant Spirit Magnetite Vein at Cloud Portent Mountain and many other things, all the way to this time's battle of Clear Concealed Lake. It was an accumulation of Yan Zhaoge's great performances that led to the clan's trust in his abilities to rise to a whole new level, therefore resulting in this unprecedented reward.

Following the battle of Clear Concealed Lake, Yan Zhaoge's fame had truly shaken the world, not as the son of Broad Creed Mountain's First Seat Elder Yan Wudi, not as a talented younger generation disciple, but as a person who, while young, was already able to influence this world's global situation.

Broad Creed Mountain's internal division had already adjusted their view towards Yan Zhaoge before this, and this time, Broad Creed Mountain's bigwigs had raised their evaluation of Yan Zhaoge a step further.

Giving him greater authority and freedom meant that they trusted more in his abilities, but also meant that he would hold greater responsibilities in the future.

Yan Zhaoge was already mentally prepared for this.

While he had the power to make decisions on the clan's behalf on

the spot, this didn't mean that he would be completely free of blame. If he performed a heinous crime, he would still have to pay for it.

Just like the East Elder, Elder Qin, before. By principle, he should have authority in everything that happened in the East Heaven Region.

And in actual fact, this was indeed true for most things.

However, in the matter of whether or not to accept Feng Yunsheng, while Elder Qin could have directly made the decision on his own, if it had turned out to be a big mistake, he would have had to take full responsibility for it.

Yan Zhaoge was alright with this. After all, while enjoying privilege, it was only natural to bear responsibility.

"I am young and inexperienced, and fear that I might not be able to bear this burden. However, since the clan believes in me, granting me such a power, I will work to the best of my abilities," Yan Zhaoge bowed solemnly towards Yuan Zhengfeng.

Yuan Zhengfeng smiled, "Zhaoge being so serious-how long has it been since I last saw it?"

"Relax, this is a reward for you, and not adding weight to your shoulders. Currently, your most pressing matter is still cultivating diligently."

Yuan Zhengfeng sighed in praise, “Although there were many coincidences and fortunate incidences involved, your current cultivation speed indeed leaves people staring in wonder. You spent too much time on various miscellaneous studies in the past; looking at it now, having thrown them away, your martial cultivation speed has also been raised up.”

Yan Zhaoge’s expression didn’t change, “I found a bit of a balance, just that in terms of those miscellaneous studies, there were many a times when I was actually pushing on with all I had.”

Fang Zhun laughed from the side, “You could say that all this is the crystallisation of your lengthy accumulation.”

They all laughed.

Yuan Zhengfeng thought of something, “Speaking of miscellaneous studies, Zhaoge has some knowledge on ancient texts, and is extremely interested in the remains left behind from the before the Great Calamity. As this old man knows, you also personally unearthed many remains?”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, “Yes, Grand Master.”

He looked at Yuan Zhengfeng. Since he was asking like this, there was most likely a continuation to it.

Could it be that the clan had unearthed remains of before the

Great Calamity that had never been discovered before? If it was like that, Yan Zhaoge was really a little interested.

Yuan Zhengfeng said, “In the great desert of the Wind Domain, someone of the clan discovered a piece of remains, very likely being something that existed before the Great Calamity, left behind after the Great Calamity occurred.”

“However, the text on the remains is extremely strange, and it is very hard to decipher and understand the meaning within.”

The Wind Domain, at the west of the Heaven Domain, also bordering the Mountain and Fire Domains, had thousands of miles of yellow sand, with tall mountains and long rivers; its environment was rather terrible, to the point that even Martial Grandmasters found it hard to bear.

In the vast expanse of the great desert, when trapped within, it was very possible for one to lose their sense of direction, finally dying in the sea of sand, forever losing their lives.

However, although the conditions there were extremely terrible, the heavens birthed numerous objects to nourish its citizens. The broad, boundless Wind Domain, its danger and natural disasters aside, also possessed many rare treasures and resources.

After the Wind Domain’s Sacred Ground, Black Nightmare Mountain, had been destroyed one year, Broad Creed Mountain, the Sacred Sun Clan and Infinite Boundless Mountain had all sent their troops in, each taking hold of a piece of its territory.

Broad Creed Mountain had originally held the greatest advantage, almost possessing all of it themselves, but following that incident with the Flame Devils that year, Broad Creed Mountain had deteriorated from its peak, losing most of its territory in the Wind Domain, especially being continually pushed back in those conservative years when they had maintained a low profile.

While the Sacred Sun Clan, rising to become the number one Sacred Ground as it was now, had grabbed control of the Wind Domain's territory on a large scale.

Currently, more than half the territory of the Wind Domain was under the Sacred Sun Clan's control.

Broad Creed Mountain and Infinite Boundless Mountain had both pushed in a foot in the Wind Domain, conflicts having been incessant where the three Sacred Grounds met.

In the battle of the Eastern Tang earlier, Broad Creed Mountain had won greatly, and other than counterattacking the lands of the Fire Domain, it also expanded its territory in the Wind Domain, its speaking power and domain of control greatly increasing.

Hearing that it was indeed remains left behind from before the Great Calamity, Yan Zhaoge got even more interested.

Looking at the Grand Elder seated below him, an old woman of the same generation as him, Yuan Zhengfeng said, "Junior

apprentice-sister He, let Zhaoge peruse it a bit, seeing if he can have any gains from it.”

The old woman, Elder He, nodded, retrieving a crystal and handing it out.

Yan Zhaoge took the crystal, infusing his aura-qi within. As his aura-qi shook, light instantly shot out from the crystal’s exterior.

The light formed a projection in mid-air, forming an illusory scene.

An all-encompassing black tempest swept along the ocean of sand beneath it. The natural conditions of many places in the Wind Domain were still unfriendly as before.

In the surface of the desert up ahead, something that resembled a stone pillar could vaguely be seen.

The stone pillar was partially revealed outside of the yellow sand, looking incomplete as it had signs of being damaged.

And inscribed on the surface of the stone pillar were patterns that whilst carrying a heavy air, were also profound and complicated.

Looking at those patterns, it could vaguely be felt how remarkable they were, yet it was hard to understand their purpose and what they meant.

Everyone here other than Yan Zhaoge had already seen it before, and not just once, but looking at it again now, they were still drawn in by it.

Seeing the stone pillar within the illusory scene, Yan Zhaoge's pupils instantly dilated.

Your mother!

A vulgarity very nearly left Yan Zhaoge's mouth.

"This is a pillar of the previous Divine Palace ah!" Yan Zhaoge sucked in a deep breath.

HSSB 202: The Fortune That Might Exist

Yan Zhaoge looked at that damaged portion of stone pillar, his mind roiling like an overturning sea.

Yan Zhaoge had always kept the Great Calamity in mind. A chance to come into contact with legacies predating it was something he was extremely interested in.

But from what he knew, there had basically not appeared any legacies related to the Divine Palace in the Eight Extremities World up till now.

The only trace was his suspicion that the legacies of Broad Creed Mountain were vaguely related to the Divine Palace, but this was still yet to be confirmed.

Other than that, according to the information Yan Zhaoge grasped, from the time of the Great Calamity up till now, no other legacies related to the Divine Palace had surfaced.

This damaged stone pillar that had appeared in the great desert of the Wind Domain, however, had once been a pillar of the Divine Palace.

This caused Yan Zhaoge's heart to blaze.

He had always wanted to find out about the specifics regarding the Great Calamity, and the legacies of the Divine Palace were more valuable than other legacies in that regard.

While from the looks of it, the stone pillar was already damaged extremely badly, as compared to other legacies, it most likely preserved many more clues as well as information.

After staring earnestly at the stone pillar within the illusory scene for a moment, Yan Zhaoge said to Yuan Zhengfeng and the others, “The patterns are indeed complicated and also ancient. Wanting to decipher them should prove very difficult.”

“However, I vaguely have some thoughts on this, just that I still can’t say of how much confidence I have of deciphering the patterns now. Can the stone pillar be brought back?”

“With the real object on hand, carefully analysing it, the chances of deciphering them would be greater.”

Elder He shook her head slightly, “You should also be aware of the Great Western Desert in the Wind Domain. The situation there is very complicated, to the extent that even Martial Saints cannot do as they like.”

She was also slightly troubled over this, “That stone pillar has become entangled together with the natural forces of the Great Western Desert, such that it is hard to remove. It could only be left where it was.”

The corners of Yan Zhaoge's mouth twitched slightly.

Her meaning was: If you want to see the stone pillar, you will have to personally make a trip to the great desert and suffer sand?

Yuan Zhengfeng said, "It is good that you already have some thoughts on this. This matter does not have to be rushed; the current time of the year is when the Great Western Desert's Black Nightmare Storm is the fiercest. Even Martial Saints, should they enter, would find it hard to deal with."

"After another few more months, when the Black Nightmare Storm has gradually weakened, you can then go in."

"Those remains being stuck within the Great Western Desert, it is hard to dig out and move them away. However, with us being unable to do it, it should also be the same for others. At the same time, there is also no need to worry about it being damaged by others."

The old Clan Chief looked at Yan Zhaoge, "Zhaoge, you don't need to rush too much on this matter; just keep it in mind."

Yan Zhaoge nodded, ceasing his infusion of aura-qi into the crystal. The illusory scene before him dissipated.

Looking at the stone pillar that was gradually disappearing before his eyes, Yan Zhaoge's gaze was slightly distant and deep.

To others, this was a legacy of before the Great Calamity that was hard to decipher and understand.

But to him, this was a key to unlock mysteries, being beneficial to his future plans, at the same time also being a fortuitous opportunity.

Yan Zhaoge momentarily narrowed his eyes into slits. Perhaps, it wasn't that there was completely no way to bring the stone pillar out of the Great Western Desert...

However, as Yuan Zhengfeng had said, there was no need to rush things. Natural disasters like the Black Nightmare Storm were oftentimes not something that humans could withstand.

Who knew how many Martial Grandmasters had been ripped apart by the Black Nightmare Storm in the past.

The past Wind Domain Sacred Ground, Black Nightmare Mountain, had always hoped to completely gain control over the Great Western Desert and the many natural disasters there. However, before they were destroyed, they had never managed to truly do so.

In having divided up the territory of the Wind Domain now, Broad Creed Mountain, the Sacred Sun Clan and Infinite Boundless Mountain had actually also only taken control in the places which could be developed. In areas like the Great Western Desert, they only merely controlled the outskirts.

Putting it harshly, the Great West Desert was completely not a place for people to stay in.

Currently, like the deathly Earth Domain, it was also a land of grave dangers.

However, it was good that the natural disasters of the Great Western Desert were closely related to the season there, like that terrifying Black Nightmare Storm, with a cycle of around half a year, sometimes strong, sometimes weak.

When the storm was weak, martial practitioners would be able to make use of the chance to enter the depths of the desert.

Of course, the dangers and tribulations of the great desert did not merely consist of the Black Nightmare Storm.

Yan Zhaoge said, "I'll first observe the patterns from earlier, attempting to understand the meanings within, waiting for the storm to weaken before entering."

Yuan Zhengfeng nodded, "That should be the way."

"Grand Master..." Yan Zhaoge, hesitated slightly for a moment before asking, "For what reason was Elder Wang corrupted and pulled over by the Decimating Abyss?"

Elder Wang was that spy revealed by the Heavenly Thunder Hall, their highest known operative of the Decimating Abyss

Organisation that Broad Creed Mountain currently knew of.

A longtime Martial Grandmaster, of the same generation as Yuan Zhengfeng and Elder He, Elder Wang had been highly respected and looked up to in the past.

Yuan Zhengfeng and the others fell momentarily silent, regretful looks appearing on their faces. Yuan Zhengfeng did not answer as it was instead Elder He who said, “Senior apprentice-brother Wang became old...”

The sentence was simple and obscure, yet Yan Zhaoge still understood the meaning hidden within.

Degrading due to age, no longer having a hope of a breakthrough, with longevity nearing its end.

Elder Wang was very old, his longevity nearing its end with regard to his cultivation base. There was little hope of his cultivation continuing to increase in the future.

Yan Zhaoge sighed inwardly, feeling pity for Elder Wang, before he suddenly realised something, unconsciously raising his head as he looked to the front.

There, Yuan Zhengfeng remained peaceful as he sat in his chair.

While having long known that Yuan Zhengfeng’s will was extremely strong, having an enlightened, optimistic personality

despite his great age, Yan Zhaoge could not help but feel a little worried.

Because of the injuries that he had suffered long ago, Yuan Zhengfeng had been stuck at the Transcending Mortality stage for many years, at the peak of all this world's Martial Grandmasters, yet still always just that paper-thin distance away from the Martial Saint realm.

It must be known that when Yuan Zhengfeng had stepped into the Transcending Mortality Martial Grandmaster realm that year, it had been even earlier than Huang Guanglie, An Qinglin and the others!

In the end, he had instead been stuck there for many years, seeing those who had lagged behind him surpassing him one by one.

The reason was not because his talents had run dry, but because there were outside chains tethering him. Also, Huang Guanglie was attempting a breakthrough yet again at the Sacred Sun Clan. This gave Yuan Zhengfeng yet more pressure.

No one knew how frustrated Yuan Zhengfeng truly was, or how unaccepting of his plight, how much pressure he had had to bear.

Moreover, because of his old injuries, Yuan Zhengfeng's longevity was also shorter than other Transcending Mortality Martial Grandmasters.

Although thinking this was somewhat offensive against his Grand Master, casting aside his emotions, Yan Zhaoge had to consider the problems related to this.

If someone with as great a willpower as Yuan Zhengfeng were to lose their mental balance, they would be far more stubborn and extreme than the average person.

In actual fact, after understanding that there were those amongst the various Sacred Grounds who had joined the Decimating Abyss, outside of Broad Creed Mountain, those who secretly worried about Yuan Zhengfeng were not few.

Yan Zhaoge raised his head to look at Yuan Zhengfeng, meeting the old man's gaze. He saw that it was clear and lively, with no signs of turbidity in the least, resembling a child's.

Yuan Zhengfeng seemed to know what Yan Zhaoge was thinking as he smiled, "It would be a lie to say that I am not impatient; the whole world knows that the pressure this old man bears is immense."

"However, for the present time at least, this matter-this old man still can bear it."

HSSB 203: The Heaven Returning Divine Pill

Looking at Yuan Zhengfeng, Yan Zhaoge also smiled, “I was too hasty in my speech; I seek Grand Master’s punishment.”

Yuan Zhengfeng smiled, waving his hands, “No matter; the problem exposed by the matter at Clear Concealed Lake this time is indeed extremely shocking.”

The old man let out a long sigh towards the heavens, “The encroachment of the Nine Underworlds penetrates through all, their spies hard to defend against. Actually, I already captured a few spies before this, just that their cultivation bases were all rather low, and there was no one as high up as senior apprentice-brother Wang this time.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled but did not speak. In such a situation, whatever he said would also be unsuitable.

Their longtime Elder of the same generation as Yuan Zhengfeng, Elder Wang had experienced those darkest ages of Broad Creed Mountain alongside him when they had kept a low profile, striving together as they saw Broad Creed Mountain gradually regain its vitality.

Sitting below Yuan Zhengfeng, the two Grand Elders were also silent. They too were of the same generation as Elder Wang, having many long years of friendship with him.

Yan Zhaoge didn’t ask about how Elder Wang was now.

Having betrayed them before leaving Broad Creed Mountain and coming into contact with the devilish qi, he should not have fallen.

However, if the devilish intent within his heart was too great, it would be hard for him to turn back, not being something that some simple words of repent would be able to accomplish.

A person's devilish thoughts having grown to a certain extent, even if they didn't fall, even if they seemed no different from normal on the outside, they were actually also already hard to bring back.

They were like kegs of gunpowder ready to explode, timed bombs that would eventually go off.

Looking at the expressions on their faces, as well as not mentioning how they had dealt with Elder Wang, Yan Zhaoge knew that the situation was probably not optimistic, and he had most likely already reached the point of not being able to turn back.

Under such circumstances, the best ending for him would be being imprisoned within the Heaven Sealing Gorge.

From a certain perspective, that would actually be a rather soft decision, perhaps holding onto the slimmest of hopes that Elder Wang would still be able to turn back eventually.

While Yan Zhaoge's position was currently already no longer that of a mere younger generation disciple, with Yuan Zhengfeng and them all attaching much weight to his opinions, Yan Zhaoge chose not to say anything on this matter.

Emerging from the Great Hall, Yan Zhaoge followed behind his father, sending over a sound transmission with his aura-qi, "How is the pill formula going now?"

Yan Di answered, "Having received the pill formula that you sent back, I have been analysing it over this past period of time, and I already have an eighty to ninety percent certainty."

Yan Zhaoge nodded. The Heaven Returning Divine Pill was not easy to concoct, and with his current attainments in alchemy, added to his current cultivation base, he also didn't dare to claim a hundred percent certainty in succeeding.

However, time waits for no man, and whether it was the Sacred Sun Clan, the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss, or the Flame Devil World, all these brought Yuan Zhengfeng and Broad Creed Mountain immense pressure.

Currently placing much weight on the Heaven Returning Divine Pill, Yan Zhaoge was looking more at its efficacy rather than the merits that his father would attain having successfully concocted it.

Beneath a broken nest, it would be hard to find an intact egg. His Grand Master Yuan Zhengfeng breaking past that barrier,

transcending mortality and achieving Sainthood, stepping into the Martial Saint realm, would hold extremely great significance for Broad Creed Mountain.

As for the other benefits on the side, they would all just be add-ons for this.

In concocting the pill, the earlier the better, because the concoction method of the Heaven Returning Divine Pill was extremely special, requiring the pill to be returned to the furnace nine times.

Each return would require quite a lot of time, and if any one of them failed midway, the entire process would have to begin from scratch.

Thus, concocting the Heaven Returning Divine Pill was an extremely demanding and time-consuming task.

If one was unlucky, or the concoction method was wrong, regardless of how sufficient the ingredients, it could take as long as ten years to successfully make the pill.

And with the current global situation, the time left to Broad Creed Mountain and Yuan Zhengfeng was not much.

Yan Di looked at Yan Zhaoge, “In these following days, I will mainly be devoting my energies to pill concoction. Your cultivation will have to rely on your own diligence.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, “You can rest easy; I won’t slack off.”

Raising his head upwards, Yan Di thought aloud, “The clan rewarded you earlier with the right to freely move about the first three levels of the Martial Repository, and also granted you a chance to enter the fourth.”

“This is permitting you to gain the latter half of the Clear Qi Profound Art beforehand.”

“As for the three supreme martial arts of our clan, have you made a decision on them?”

The Clear Qi Profound Art was the foundation of Broad Creed Mountain. Those who became its direct disciples would be able to cultivate its first half in the Martial Scholar realm, only able to get the latter half after having become a Martial Grandmaster.

And the latter half was extremely important, its conditions restricted very harshly.

At least up till now, those who could begin cultivating in it while only a Martial Scholar, from past till present, only consisted of Zhan Dongge, Yan Di and Yan Zhaoge.

As for Broad Creed Mountain’s Three Supreme Arts, they were the most supreme martial arts passed down in Broad Creed Mountain, representing the highest level of accomplishment of

Broad Creed Mountain's martial dao up till now, being above the Eight Extreme Arts.

At the same time, they were also the highest accomplishments of the current martial civilisation, having begun developing once again following the Great Calamity.

Yan Zhaoge chuckled, "I hope you do not mind, but if I can choose, I intend to learn the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm."

Broad Creed Mountain's Three Supreme Arts were the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm, the Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre, and the Limitless Heavenly Sword.

These three supreme martial arts were all profound and unpredictable, possessing great power, only Broad Creed Mountain's most outstanding martial practitioners able to cultivate in them.

The conditions for learning them were even stricter than those of the latter half of the Clear Qi Profound Art. Even Fu Enshu, whom Yuan Zhengfeng treated as his own, was only allowed to cultivate in one after she had become a Martial Grandmaster and faced countless tests satisfying Yuan Zhengfeng requirements.

Shi Tie was an exception, having not cultivated in the Three Supreme Arts even now, instead continuing to develop the Vajra Body further, wanting to completely unearth all of its potential.

This was due to his personality, being a special case that need not be considered here.

Meanwhile, for Yan Di and Fang Zhun, Yan Di cultivated in the Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre, while Fang Zhun cultivated in the Limitless Heavenly Sword.

Hearing Yan Zhaoge's choice, Yan Di smiled, "In choosing martial arts, it is only right to choose the one best suited for yourself. It is not like if the father cultivates in the sabre, the son must also do the same. Still, I had thought that you would choose the Limitless Heavenly Sword."

Yan Zhaoge smiled, "Actually, I am very interested in all three, just that I am still most interested in the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm."

Yan Di said, "Since you were given permission to go up to the fourth level and choose, you should make the decision yourself."

The two returned to Yan Di's residence, conversing for a while more before Yan Zhaoge took his leave, with Yan Di continuing to analyse the formula for the Heaven Returning Divine Pill.

Leaving Yan Di's residence, Yan Zhaoge sucked in a deep breath, retrieving that crystal, within which was the scene of the damaged skeleton of a stone pillar of the Divine Palace located within the Great Western Desert.

Waiting outside, as Ah Hu saw Yan Zhaoge emerge, he hurriedly came up. Other than him, the gigantic Pan-Pan also rushed over passionately, with the momentum of going to push Yan Zhaoge down.

This giant fellow's current size was already comparable to an elephant's, or perhaps even a little bigger than that...

Yan Zhaoge naturally stopped Pan-Pan irritably as he patted his huge head, "You can already control your size now. Being so big, you take up too much space. Rushing around blindly in the clan, you might even break something without even noticing."

Pan-Pan blinked, streams of spiritual qi surfacing about him, transforming into white fire and black water which shrouded and surrounded his entire body.

The next moment, the fire and water dissipated, with his size indeed much smaller.

Yan Zhaoge nodded satisfiedly. Then, he strode off in the direction of the Martial Repository.

The fourth level of the Martial Repository which he had always been interested in before-he could finally go and experience it this time.

HSSB 204: I Really Didn't Mean It This Time

The martial skills that Ah Hu was cultivating had already long since surpassed the level of the first and even the second floor of the Martial Repository.

However, according to the rules, despite how close he was to Yan Zhaoge and Yan Di, without being a disciple of Broad Creed Mountain, he also couldn't enter the Martial Repository.

Ah Hu had already long since accepted this, as he asked Yan Zhaoge, "Young Master, around how long will you be staying in the Martial Repository?"

Yan Zhaoge thought for a bit, "This time is a little special, and will take much longer than previous times. I shouldn't be emerging before sunset."

Ah Hu nodded, waving his hands towards Yan Zhaoge, "Young Master, then you be busy with your things; I'll go find a place to play, and come here to wait for you when its sunset."

Yan Zhaoge similarly waved his hands out of habit, "En, find a cool place to go hole up like a cat."

While he was mocking Ah Hu a little, Yan Zhaoge knew that that casual looking big man was most likely going to find a place to cultivate in.

Ah Hu's position and his actions of always following beside Yan Zhaoge made it very easy for people to overlook him.

However, actually, Ah Hu was not yet thirty, making him younger than Xu Fei and the others, while similar in age to Liu Shengfeng and Xie Youchan.

Being able to attain such a cultivation base at such an age; other than possessing shocking talent, this big man was also much more diligent and hardworking in his martial cultivation than most.

Yan Zhaoge entered the first level of the Martial Repository. At this moment, there were quite a few people there, all younger disciples of Broad Creed Mountain who had entered the clan a bit later.

Seeing Yan Zhaoge, everyone was stunned for a moment, before they bowed towards him in unison, "Greetings, senior apprentice-brother Yan."

To these young people, while Yan Zhaoge was of the same generation as them, he was already a legendary figure.

Seeing Yan Zhaoge, they were even more nervous than when seeing many Elders of the clan.

Yan Zhaoge smiled and nodded towards them. Then, his gaze sweeping the area, he suddenly saw familiar faces.

Wearing white clothes covered by black-bordered blue robes, Feng Yunsheng was in the garb of a core, direct disciple of Broad Creed Mountain.

Beside her followed a child, currently looking dazedly at him. It was precisely Han Long'er, now Ying Longtu after Yan Zhaoge renamed him.

Ying Longtu still looked to be rather sluggish, but he seemed to recognise Yan Zhaoge.

Feng Yunsheng smiled, "Longtu, don't you always ask me where senior apprentice-brother Yan has gone? He is right before you now."

Ying Longtu gave a simple smile, "Senior...senior apprentice-brother Yan."

Smiling, Yan Zhaoge nodded, going up to them, "Not having seen you in over half a year, Longtu has grown by quite a bit."

He turned to look at Feng Yunsheng, smiling, "The two of you have grown rather close."

Feng Yunsheng glanced somewhat strangely at Ying Longtu before saying, "Because we share a common interest."

The corners of Yan Zhaoge's mouth twitched slightly, "...eating?"

“We’re also very good at it,” Feng Yunsheng nodded, patting Ying Longtu’s shoulder, “Many a times, I don’t even dare to start a fire on Broad Creed Mountain, instead going out to hunt. Otherwise, with the two of us added together, some things on the mountain might have been eaten to extinction.”

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “Having returned this time, you must count me in as well.”

Feng Yunsheng stared, “You, the Broad Creed Young Master, famed under the heavens as a Heaven’s favoured son of the new generation, actually wish to fight for food with frail women and children-how can you bear to do it? Aren’t you afraid that it will harm your reputation?”

“The two of you can also be considered frail women and children?” Yan Zhaoge appraised her and Ying Longtu, shaking his head in mock disgust.

However, after a few glances, Yan Zhaoge suddenly chortled, “Bearing Ying Longtu’s weight has fallen mostly onto your shoulders-do you have the feeling of being a mother?”

“Longtu, what do you call her?” Not waiting for Feng Yunsheng to rebut, Yan Zhaoge asked Ying Longtu smilingly.

Ying Longtu glanced at Feng Yunsheng somewhat dazedly before answering honestly, “Junior apprentice-sister Feng.”

Yan Zhaoge shook his head repeatedly, “Wrong, wrong, you should call her...Mother Yun!”

Ying Longtu blinked, swivelling his head to stare at Feng Yunsheng, seemingly really considering if he should change how he called her.

Even the easygoing Feng Yunsheng was unsettled by this gaze to the point of her hairs standing up a little.

She stared at Yan Zhaoge unhappily for a moment, then snorted, sending a sound transmission over with her aura-qi, “Whose hairy child is this, already rather old yet still so immature, only knowing how to snatch food from his little brother all day long.”

“What are you so worked up about it for? It’s not like I’m snatching milk to drink...” Relaxed, Yan Zhaoge failed to think before he spoke, giving her a casual rebuttal, only to instantly feel the words were inappropriate after they had left his mouth, “Erm...I’m sorry...”

Feng Yunsheng was stunned, only reacting after quite some time had passed. Looking at Yan Zhaoge’s discomfort, she found it somewhat aggravating whilst also funny.

She instead smiled at this time, also not feeling distressed as she chuckled, “I’m really sorry, sir. I have caused you to be disappointed. The season is not right, and our store indeed doesn’t have this dish at this time. Even a skilful woman would be hard

pressed to cook a meal without rice.”

Yan Zhaoge let out a dry cough, “It’s alright, it’s alright-don’t put it to heart...”

Luckily, those last few sentences were communicated through sound transmission via aura-qi, and others could not hear it. Otherwise, with so many junior apprentice-brothers and sisters beside them, if they heard it, that might be a little bad.

The two exchanged glances, then changed the topic by a tacit understanding.

Feng Yunsheng gave a natural and poised laugh, “They all say that my generation’s Maidens of Extreme Yin, as Martial Scholars, can shake the global situation of this world. However, at the end of the day, the basis of this still lies in the Sacred Artifact, the Extreme Yin Crown.”

“It can’t compare to senior apprentice-brother Yan this time; truly relying on your personal power to change the situation greatly, standing against and overthrowing the great tides!”

Yan Zhaoge waved his hands, “That’s overstating things; there was some luck involved this time.”

“After the matter, I also reflected on it,” Yan Zhaoge sighed, saying, “Thinking back on the entire incident, it was still rather dangerous.”

“ The saying ‘When the time comes for books to be used, hating how few had been read earlier’ –I felt that deeply this time.”

“In the past, though I had done some research into formations before, I had only scratched the surface. For the Devilish Domain Grand Formation this time, I was unable to see through many of its principles as well as the details of its circulation; otherwise, I wouldn’t have had to risk making my move at the final critical moment.”

As Yan Zhaoge said this, he shook his head, “Returning to the Mountain this time, in the remaining time left over from cultivation, I have already decided to put in more effort on formations, working to make up for my own shortcomings.”

As he was saying this, Yan Zhaoge suddenly discovered Feng Yunsheng directing a strange gaze at him.

Yan Zhaoge lowered his head to look at his clothes. They were worn correctly.

“What is the meaning of this expression of yours?” Yan Zhaoge asked curiously.

Feng Yunsheng appraised Yan Zhaoge all over, then said to him in a strange tone, “Senior apprentice-brother Yan, do you know? Saying that so seriously just now, you appeared exceptionally arrogant.”

“Huh?” Yan Zhaoge was bemused by this.

Feng Yunsheng said, “Senior apprentice-brother Yan, while I didn’t go along this time, I also heard that for that grand formation to be broken, it could not just have been achieved with the power of a Sacred Artifact fragment. A high attainment in formations was also required to accurately grasp that instant’s chance. Generally speaking, many Martial Grandmasters would also be unable to do it.”

“You say now that your attainment in formations is too low, still needing to continue putting in effort in it. This truly is...”

Feng Yunsheng looked at Yan Zhaoge disdainfully. Perhaps she didn’t know what acting cool meant, but this didn’t stop her from looking down of such actions of Yan Zhaoge’s.

Yan Zhaoge was stunned for a moment before he finally reacted, not knowing whether to laugh or to cry.

Although I rather like to act cool, rather like to show off, rather like to seem godly before others...

I really wasn’t thinking of doing so just now ah!

This time, I was truly reflecting on myself very earnestly, being humble and introspective ah!

I truly want to put in more effort in researching on formations, increasing my abilities in this area ah!

HSSB 205: The youngest Martial Scholar

Yan Zhaoge was shocked.

Looking at Feng Yunsheng, the corners of his mouth twitched, “Junior apprentice-sister Feng, I very seriously, very solemnly believe that I need to raise my attainment in formations, by putting in some hard work in that area.”

Feng Yunsheng was surprised as she carefully appraised Yan Zhaoge, saying somewhat helplessly after a while, “With you like that, senior apprentice-brother Yan, doesn’t this make other people not know where to place their face even more?”

“At least now, I feel like I am an idiot.”

Yan Zhaoge was silent for a moment before he suddenly laughed, “It’s fine. Anyway, most of the time, when you think like that I’m acting too arrogant, it’s actually not wrong. Maligning me once in awhile is reasonable from the impression I gave you. In truth, it also cannot be considered as you maligning me.”

Hearing Yan Zhaoge’s words, Feng Yunsheng refocused on him once more, her gaze getting softer and softer.

Yan Zhaoge turned to look at Ying Longtu by the side, placing his hand on the latter’s wrist and checking for a while before smiling, “Longtu’s improvement is very fast ah.”

Although he seemed a little slow, upon receiving Yan Zhaoge's praise, Ying Longtu smiled very happily.

Feng Yunsheng smiled, "The Big Dipper Body is truly remarkable; even eldest apprentice-uncle, Master and the others find Longtu's rate of progress stunning."

Yan Zhaoge and Feng Yunsheng no longer continued conversing via aura-qi for their discussion on Ying Longtu, instead conversing normally.

Hearing their words, the other younger disciples also gazed over curiously.

Ying Longtu momentarily became the focal point of everyone's gazes.

There was no choice; despite only having been brought to Broad Creed Mountain for over half a year, the talent and potential Ying Longtu displayed was really too shocking.

As one of the six great Sacred Grounds, all those disciples who were able to make it into Broad Creed Mountain were one of ten thousand.

In Broad Creed Mountain, everyone was also very outstanding. Perhaps it wasn't so easily visible, requiring those geniuses amongst geniuses like Xu Fei, Lu Wen, Yan Zhaoge, Feng Yunsheng and Sikong Qing to reveal their excellence even amongst them.

However, while before them, these others seemed rather ordinary, out of Broad Creed Mountain, amongst other first and second-rate powers, all of them were genius-level figures.

But it was in such an environment that Ying Longtu displayed a rate of improvement that left all the younger disciples stunned.

This child who seemed even a little unintelligent in his regular life, when cultivating, could not be described as improving one day a thousand li-one day; ten thousand li was more appropriate to describe it.

Even Yuan Zhengfeng had been shocked; this little freak's cultivation speed in the Body Refinement realm was even faster than Yan Di's in the past.

Suddenly descending from nowhere, then coming up from behind to surpass them-this gave the other younger disciples immense pressure.

In constantly taking care of Ying Longtu, other than helping him in his day-to-day living, Feng Yunsheng was also preventing others from bullying him and rejecting him, preventing others from secretly setting him up to fall due to his usually rather unintelligent brain.

While Ying Longtu was obedient and loved to learn, he was indeed usually rather simple. Sometimes, having committed an error after being secretly misled by people, he might still not

realise it.

Yan Zhaoge surveyed his surroundings, saying calmly, “Big Dipper Body, also known as the Thirty Six Acupoints True Dragon Body, or the Big Dipper Dragon Body.”

“Qi and blood at birth being strong like a dragon’s or elephant’s, with a mind clear as water and a mirror.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “As long as it is related to the qi and blood of the fleshly body, Longtu can virtually accomplish it in a single go, equivalent to having successfully cultivated it in his mother’s womb.”

“Therefore, in terms of fleshly body cultivation, he is very possibly the strongest in this world, with no one above him.”

“And in other areas, like the adjusting of the qi, the tempering of inner qi and its accumulation as well as many other areas, he also possesses a great advantage, the background gifted to him at birth being one of the best in this world.”

Yan Zhaoge stroked his lower chin, “Therefore, in the early stages of cultivation, in the Body Refinement realm, his speedy improvement is only natural.”

Feng Yunsheng nodded.

The Body Refinement realm had ten levels, with the body-

tempering, the meridian-connecting and the qi-directing stages, following which was its peak stage, the Inner Discernment stage. Basically, these were all related to qi and blood as well as muscles and bones.

Starting out at the early body-tempering stage, one would first seek to strengthen their flesh and blood, tempering the flesh of the entire body till it was filled with power, much stronger as well as more agile than that of ordinary people.

Afterwards, in the mid body-tempering stage, the muscles were trained to become tougher, tempering the body a step further as the entire body's explosive power was strengthened.

In the late body-tempering stage, where the bones and blood resonated, it was the first time the bones were being cultivated in as their toughness and resilience were increased greatly, allowing entire person's strength and agility to increase another entire level.

Afterwards, they would begin pushing past the first major bottleneck for Martial Artists, moving towards the meridian-connecting stage.

Having successfully connected the body's meridians, they could be considered as having stepped into the early meridian-connecting stage. Afterward, they would unceasingly strengthen and expand the meridians, till they were about three times larger than they had been before, at which point the Martial Artist has reached the mid meridian-connecting stage.

Afterwards, having connected all the meridians of the entire body meant that they would have reached the late meridian-connecting stage, setting up a good foundation for their future cultivation a step further.

After the late meridian-connecting stage, one could begin to cultivate in qi. Those who successfully cultivated out a breath of inner qi which did not dissipate could be known as qi-directing Martial Artists.

In the early qi-directing stage, the qi and blood was vigorous. Through inhaling and exhaling, speeding up and moderating the circulation of qi, conditioning the qi and blood, one's strength would be increased greatly.

The mid qi-directing stage saw a very important process where a qi ocean was opened within the dantian, with one's inner qi growing greatly.

The late qi-directing stage was also known as the marrow-washing stage, wherein a martial practitioner would work on the marrows within their bones for the first time, relying on the moderation of the qi and blood, the inside and outside coming together as one, the inner qi entering deep into the bone marrows, from there achieving an initial level of switching out one's bones and being reborn. Its special characteristic was inner qi entering the bones, the sound of thunder washing one's marrows.

Finally, the peak stage of the Body Refinement realm was known

as the Inner Discernment stage. Having attained it, one could look within their body, gradually gaining a grasp of their internal condition, also feeling the acupoints of their entire body.

At this point, a Martial Artist could be said to have reached the peak of the Body Refinement realm, beginning their attempts to cultivate their inner qi into aura-qi. On the successful production of aura-qi, they would have entered the Martial Scholar realm.

Yan Zhaoge patted Ying Longtu's shoulder, "To Longtu, the ten levels of Body Refinement only consist of from the seventh to eighth level, opening a qi ocean within the dantian, and from the ninth to tenth level, Inner Discernment. These two bottlenecks require some time in earnest cultivation, while the others can just be casually breezed past."

At this point, Yan Zhaoge also felt rather emotional as he looked at Ying Longtu, "Only having officially cultivated for half a year? Already at the Inner Discernment stage, an unprecedented record since following the Great Calamity."

He smiled, "It is still too early to say for my father's other records, but the title of the Youngest Martial Scholar will definitely be broken by Longtu."

Hearing his words, the other disciples all exhaled a cold breath, the gazes with which they looked at Ying Longtu instead calming greatly.

Yan Zhaoge smiled, "I still haven't finished. From cultivating

inner qi into aura-qi and breaking through into the Martial Scholar realm, Longtu will also have to work hard. However, the mid inner aura Martial Scholar realm, washing and refining the internal organs with the aura-qi, and the early outer aura Martial Scholar realm, with the second washing of the bones within the marrows, would still be a piece of cake for him.”

Everyone smiled bitterly.

When the advantage possessed was just too immense, other instead wouldn't be able to feel jealous.

Especially in the case of slow, clueless Ying Longtu-getting along with him well was actually also not hard.

HSSB 206: Fourth Level Of The Martial Repository

Looking at the youths before him, Yan Zhaoge no longer continued speaking.

Some things were good in moderation. If they knew more, it would instead be detrimental to their vigour and self-confidence.

Once he reached the Martial Scholar realm, other than the mid inner aura stage and the early outer aura stage, Ying Longtu's advantage in terms of his qi and blood would still be very clear, just not as heaven-defying as before.

Having become a Martial Scholar, the advantages in his qi and blood would mostly present itself in actual combat, although his usual cultivation speed would no longer be as shocking as before.

However, for the Big Dipper Body, other than blood being like dragons or elephants, the mind would still be intelligent and the senses acute.

The important bottleneck from the outer aura stage to the Xiantian stage saw spirituality being developed in the aura-qi as a martial practitioner comprehended the heavens and the earth. This would also be far simpler for Ying Longtu than for others.

At the same time, this advantage would still exist in his future cultivation, influencing him deeply even at higher cultivation

realms.

Yan Zhaoge himself, through several fortuitous encounters and methods, had unceasingly improved and strengthened his physique in his usual cultivation.

And like Shi Tie, cultivating in the Vajra Body till its peak to the point of the body resembling glazed Vajra, the defensive power of his fleshly body would far surpass ordinary martial practitioners.

Such situations were still not rare, just that these had all been developed through cultivation, rather than Ying Longtu, who was gifted this physique at his birth.

Looking around at the younger disciples, Yan Zhaoge said, “Having good talent means that your starting point is higher, but it ultimately cannot determine your eventual accomplishments. At the end of the day, that will still have to depend on yourself.”

“Having a simple mind, Longtu focuses single-mindedly on cultivation, actually not needing people to worry too much about him.”

“It is instead everyone who has to keep their hearts stable the more things are like this,” Yan Zhaoge said mildly, “Someone’s talent being superior is not to be feared; what is to be feared is someone more talented than you being even more hardworking than you.”

“Already behind in your starting point, not putting in more effort in the process of pursuit-how ever will you surpass those ahead of you?”

Yan Zhaoge clapped his hands lightly, “If you only hope for those in the lead to stumble and fall, such things that are wholly based on luck-do you think they are reliable?”

The crowd of younger disciples all heard a warning bell sound in their minds as they came to with a start, “We thank senior apprentice-brother Yan for your guidance; we will definitely work hard in our cultivation.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly, swivelling his head to glance at Feng Yunsheng.

As he knew, she was akin to a model for would-be pursuers.

Even Shi Tie and Fu Enshu, those cultivating maniacs, were full of praises for her.

And with her talent originally also top notch, through her painstaking effort, her cultivation had increased by leaps and bounds, while not as eye-catching as Ying Longtu’s, her progress also causing everyone to involuntarily sigh in admiration.

Feng Yunsheng expression was normal, smiling as she looked at the crowd of younger disciples. However, exchanging glances with Yan Zhaoge, they both soundlessly sighed.

However, while Yan Zhaoge's encouragement was not wrong in principle, if these youths wanted to catch up to Ying Longtu, the difficulty of this would be extremely immense.

In this flourishing martial civilisation, a great advantage like this was oftentimes not something that effort could make up for.

Not only Broad Creed Mountain, whether it's the Sacred Sun Clan or the other Sacred Grounds, any single power, whether first-rate, second-rate or even lower, would devote their efforts to grooming their most outstanding disciples.

At the end of the day, their best resources would always be prioritised to a select few-this was an unavoidable thing.

This very easily creates a situation of the strong growing stronger.

The information known by Yan Zhaoge surpassed what Feng Yunsheng knew of.

For example, as Yan Zhaoge knew, the Qilin Spring Baptism of Broad Creed Mountain had actually had only three chances left. After Yan Zhaoge and Feng Yunsheng had undergone the baptism, there was currently only a single chance left.

And there was at least an eighty percent chance that this chance would fall to Ying Longtu.

Sadly, although also a direct disciple of Broad Creed Mountain, the Lu Wen who always had the Qilin Spring Baptism on his mind was probably going to have his hopes completely dashed.

Was this fair to Lu Wen? If he were stronger than Yan Zhaoge, Feng Yunsheng and Ying Longtu, it would definitely be unfair.

But if he truly displayed greater potential and strength than the trio, other than Feng Yunsheng, whose situation was special, Lu Wen would most likely be able to squeeze out one of the other two for their baptism.

As Fang Zhun's direct disciple, for this important reward of the clan, even against Yan Di's only son Yan Zhaoge, Lu Wen could also compete for it.

Sadly, even discounting Feng Yunsheng being a Maiden of Extreme Yin, against the trio, Lu Wen didn't possess any advantage at all, and was instead inferior to them.

Yan Zhaoge and Ying Longtu having consecutively come out of nowhere, it was too strong a blow for those who were striving for the Qilin Spring Baptism.

However, for Lu Wen, even without Ying Longtu, he would still have to face the competition of Sikong Qing.

After stepping into the Martial Scholar realm, Sikong Qing's rate

of improvement had been too stunning, her potential and limelight having vaguely come to overshadow Lu Wen.

If not for Ying Longtu rising up from nowhere, for this final Qilin Spring Baptism Ceremony, Sikong Qing had an even greater chance than Lu Wen.

It was just that Sikong Qing didn't seem to mind this much at all.

Thinking about it sometimes, Yan Zhaoge would also feel rather bad about it.

Although he had been defeated, it could not be said that Lu Wen was not diligent in his training, was not an outstanding disciple.

Sadly, new waves had surged ahead of the old, each wave fiercer than the last, causing Lu Wen to become like a large table filled full of cups – the newest addition knocking the old off.

Everyone was superb, far more superb than the ordinary martial practitioner, but resources and fortuitous happenings were, at the end of the day, limited. Only the most incredible could be chosen from amongst all those who were superb.

In planning for the long term, while the clan should be fair and just in terms of the grooming of its younger generation, it still couldn't strive for total equality.

Good iron was used on a blade; no matter where it was, this

principle didn't change.

“When flowing against the tide, one either advances or is pushed back ah,” Yan Zhaoge shook his head slightly, bidding Feng Yunsheng, Ying Longtu and the others farewell before heading upstairs.

Currently, Yan Zhaoge could already freely enter and exit the Martial Repository's third level as he liked.

Ever since Broad Creed Mountain had been founded, only the Exalted Heaven Shaker Zhan Dongge of the past as well as his father Yan Di had ever received this privilege as a Martial Scholar.

This was the greatest affirmation of a younger generation disciple's martial talent as well as abilities, representing the clan's trust as well as hopes.

From a certain perspective, everything else aside, just this privilege alone distinguished Yan Zhaoge from Broad Creed Mountain's other core, direct disciples of his generation.

What was worthy of mentioning was that while being fine with the matter of the Qilin Spring Baptism, Sikong Qing had been extremely envious of Yan Zhaoge, having obtained this reward.

The usually cold and aloof girl displayed a rarely seen emotion of envy.

To Yan Zhaoge, he could slowly take his time to tour the third level and below. What drew his attention more now was the fourth level.

Sucking in a deep breath, Yan Zhaoge ascended the stairs.

Moving from the third to the fourth level, Yan Zhaoge clearly felt as though he had passed through some kind of barrier.

The fourth level of the Martial Repository had an independent defensive formation.

And the one who presided over this formation was this old man before Yan Zhaoge's eyes, directly lying sideways across the floor as he pretended to be sleeping soundly.

He was also the First Seat Elder of Broad Creed Mountain's Martial Repository.

Earlier, he had already heard from Yuan Zhengfeng that Yan Zhaoge had obtained special permission. If it had been anyone who had openly ascended like this, he would have beaten them out long ago.

As Yan Zhaoge stepped onto the Martial Repository's fourth level, the old man opened his eyes, looking at him calmly.

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly, bowing to him, "Grand Uncle-Master."

Perhaps other younger generation disciples would not know, but Yan Zhaoge was clear on how remarkable this old man before him was.

That year, it was this old man who had competed with his Grand Master, Yuan Zhengfeng, for that generation's Clan Chief position.

HSSB 207: Broad Creed Mountain's Origin, News On The Divine Palace

When conversing casually with his father, Yan Di had once mentioned that with his current cultivation base, in all of Broad Creed Mountain, other than his Master Yuan Zhengfeng, there was only one person over whom he was not certain that he could definitely clinch victory.

This person was the current First Seat Elder of the Martial Repository, who had competed with Yuan Zhengfeng for the position of Clan Chief in the past, Xin Dongping.

After earnestly considering for a time, Yan Di had clarified that of all the Martial Grandmasters under the heavens whom he knew of, other than Yuan Zhengfeng, there was only Xin Dongping for whom he lacked that confidence.

After he had lost to Yuan Zhengfeng that year, Xin Dongping had always been cultivating holed up within Broad Creed Mountain, seldom going out into the world. At least, of the current younger generation of the Eight Extremities World, there were already very few who knew of his existence.

Even Broad Creed Mountain's younger generation only knew that the First Seat of the Martial Repository's, Elder Xin, was a longtime elder of the clan, being of the same generation as the old Chief and the two Grand Elders. Very few truly knew of exactly what kind of figure Elder Xin was.

However, with his background, and with how he was currently highly regarded within the clan, he had access to a lot of information inaccessible to many of his peers.

For example, of those of Broad Creed Mountain who was proficient in all its Eight Extreme Arts, there were currently only four people, including his father Yan Di.

Other than Yan Di, the other three were Broad Creed Mountain's number one expert, the old Chief Yuan Zhengfeng, Yan Zhaoge's second-apprentice uncle Fang Zhun, and this Xin Dongping currently right before him!

Of Broad Creed Mountain's Three Supreme Arts, Fang Zhun cultivated in the Limitless Heavenly Sword, Yan Di cultivated in the Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre, whilst attempting to create a martial art more suitable for himself, and Yuan Zhengfeng cultivated in the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm and the Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre.

While Xin Dongping was the only person other than Yuan Zhengfeng who was proficient in two of Broad Creed Mountain's Three Supreme Arts.

While cultivating in more martial arts didn't mean that one's combat prowess would definitely be greater, Broad Creed Mountain's Three Supreme Arts were all not easy to cultivate. Having been able to achieve it like Yuan Zhengfeng only spoke of Xin Dongping's remarkability.

While they would not admit it openly, the other Sacred Grounds, the Sacred Sun Clan included, all privately acknowledged Broad Creed Mountain to be the strongest of the entire Eight Extremities World in terms of Martial Grandmasters.

While the younger generation didn't know Xin Dongping, the elder generation would not forget that Broad Creed Mountain still had such a first class figure.

It was rumoured that having lost to Yuan Zhengfeng, Xin Dongping had lost part of his spirit which left a barrier behind in his heart, making it hard to achieve a breakthrough into the Martial Saint realm like Yuan Zhengfeng. Despite this, in the Martial Grandmaster realm, the deterrence Xin Dongping's strength presented was not much inferior to Yuan Zhengfeng's.

Xin Dongping remained lying on the floor of the Martial Repository's fourth level, not getting up.

However, he was seriously appraising Yan Zhaoge with his eyes, nodding after a while as he cut to the chase, directly asking, "Are you choosing one of the Three Supreme Arts to cultivate in now, or will you wait till you have become a Martial Grandmaster?"

Imparting the latter half of the Clear Qi Profound Art to Yan Zhaoge was already something that would definitely happen.

Yan Zhaoge being allowed to cultivate in the Three Supreme Arts was also a sure thing; it was only just a matter of time.

“I wish to try now,” Yan Zhaoge smiled as he answered, “I choose the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm.”

Xin Dongping did not ask further, directly nodding as he pointed upwards.

The ceiling of the Martial Repository’s fourth level instantly shone.

Within the light, four illusory shadows appeared, one in the middle, the other three surrounding it in a triangular formation.

Gazing over carefully, Yan Zhaoge saw that that illusory shadow in the centre was a scroll, which contained the latter half of Broad Creed Mountain’s orthodox direct lineage Clear Qi Profound Art.

Around the scroll hovered three things: a sabre, a sword and an imprinted palm mark.

As Yan Zhaoge’s gaze fell on that sabre, a domineering, heroic man seemed to appear before his eyes, mighty to the extreme, his momentum as majestic as the heavens.

The Exalted Heaven Shaker, Zhan Dongge!

The number one expert of Broad Creed Mountain ever since its establishment, and also the number one expert of the Eight Extremities World following the time of the Great Calamity.

What evoked the regret of countless people was that such a Zhan Dongge had actually still possessed great room for improvement. If he had not died early, who knew what heights he could have attained.

It was precisely when Zhan Dongge had been Chief that Broad Creed Mountain had been in its golden age.

Before Zhan Dongge, Broad Creed Mountain had actually only possessed a single most supreme martial art left behind by its founder, the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm.

Afterwards, Zhan Dongge had created the Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre, increasing the number of Broad Creed Mountain's most supreme martial arts.

Yan Zhaoge gazed towards the other side. As his gaze fell on that sword, an illusory scene surfaced before his eyes, as another figure appeared.

This person bore some resemblance to Zhan Dongge, but had a calm, quiet temperament, seeming like the great earth which could bear all things.

Zhan Dongge's blood brother, also Broad Creed Mountain's Chief following Zhan Dongge, the Heaven Diviner Zhan Xilou.

After experiencing the first major decisive battle with the Flame

Devil World, Broad Creed Mountain's vitality had been greatly harmed, plummeting down from the highest peak to the lowest valley. It had been this quiet and peaceful looking man who had led Broad Creed Mountain out of its darkest ages, welcoming the new light of dawn once more.

Following that, like his brother, Zhan Xilou perished in yet another great battle with the Fire Devils, dying heroically in battle.

Other than his personality, Zhan Xilou's martial path was also different from his brother's, as he opened up a different path for Broad Creed Mountain.

He created the Limitless Heavenly Sword, which came to be known alongside the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm and the Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre as the Broad Creed Three Supreme Arts, at the same time also being hailed alongside three other supreme sword arts as the Four Great Sword Arts of the current Eight Extremities World.

The Exalted Heaven Shaker and the Heaven Diviner were the most legendary and colourful pair of brothers of the Eight Extremities World following the Great Calamity, their influence on Broad Creed Mountain deep and far-reaching.

Not only did this embody everything they had done while alive, their remnant lustre still glowed on amidst the passing of the ages.

Viewing the flair of his predecessors, Yan Zhaoge was also filled with emotions.

However, in choosing martial arts today, Yan Zhaoge had long since made his choice. He would not choose the Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre, and also not the Limitless Heavenly Sword, his target instead being Broad Creed Mountain's oldest supreme martial art, the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm.

Yes, Broad Creed Mountain's oldest supreme martial art.

The foundation of Broad Creed Mountain's martial arts had been the Clear Qi Profound Art and the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm, one internal and one external, working together in concert. Its other martial arts, the Eight Extreme Arts as well, were all based upon this foundation.

Yan Zhaoge's reason for choosing the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm wasn't its relative age. What truly interested him was the fact that the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm had the shadow of the Clear Jade lineage of before the Great Calamity behind it.

While the Clear Qi Profound Art seemed to be related a little to the Clear Qi lineage of before the Great Calamity.

Broad Creed Mountain's founder, the Heaven Establishing Old Man Qiu Yuan, had excavated remains left behind from the Great Calamity, developing what eventually became the earliest martial legacies of Broad Creed Mountain based on this foundation.

It was only that Yan Zhaoge felt a little speechless by the fact that the Heaven Establishing Old Man, Qiu Yuan, had actually blended

the scattered remains of the legacies of the Clear Qi lineage and the Clear Jade lineage together.

However, this was not the main thing. The main thing was that while the legacies of the Clear Qi and Clear Jade lineages were a little scattered, Yan Zhaoge was seventy to eighty percent certain that they had been of their direct lineages.

This caused Yan Zhaoge to be extremely interested.

This was because these legacies had only been possessed by the Divine Palace before the Great Calamity had descended. Yan Zhaoge's Peerless Heavenly Scripture also originated from the Clear Jade lineage.

Yan Zhaoge's gaze fell on that scroll and that imprinted palm mark. While they were but silhouettes, he could still feel an ancient feel emanating off them.

"During the Great Calamity that year, if I am not wrong, it wasn't actually that the whole world was embroiled in it at the same time. Rather, the Divine Palace was the first to be affected, standing at its forefront..." Yan Zhaoge's eyes flickered with a dim light.

HSSB 208: The Fragment That Fell From The Sky

Numerous thoughts flashed through Yan Zhaoge's mind, disappearing in an instant.

He momentarily narrowed his eyes, calming his mind till his gaze was stoic and without fluctuations, revealing only the look of a younger generation disciple yearning for the clan's most supreme martial arts.

Yan Zhaoge looked at Xin Dongping, who nodded mildly. So Yan Zhaoge walked towards the radiance of that hovering illusory shadow, his entire person stepping within.

From that silhouetted scroll, countless streams of light instantly descended, enveloping Yan Zhaoge.

A large amount of characters surfaced within Yan Zhaoge's mind, the contents being the latter half of the Clear Qi Profound Art.

Although it had the shadow of the legacy of the Clear Qi lineage of before the Great Calamity behind it, starting with the Heaven Establishing Old Man Qiu Yuan, following the refinements of generations of experts of Broad Creed Mountain, the Clear Qi Profound Art already possessed unique profundities of its own, as befitting of an outstanding martial scripture.

Corroborating it with the scriptures stored within the Divine

Palace that he had read before, Yan Zhaoge's gains were somewhat great.

However, all of this could be slowly analysed later. What Yan Zhaoge paid most heed to now was that as he came into contact with the Clear Qi Profound Art, his consciousness seemed to pass through time and space, scenes from times long past appearing before his eyes.

Infinite tribulations descended, the heavens roiling and the earth overturning, resembling the end of the world.

A streak of light descended from the sky, breaking through layers upon layers of horizon, ripping through an infinite amount of space, descending upon the Eight Extremities World, landing in the midst of a mountain range.

On one of its mountain peaks, a long, thin, and profound mark was left behind.

After who knew how many years had passed, one day, someone passed through this land. Upon viewing this remnant mark, he had some thoughts as he detected the profundities within, comprehending its concept for many days as he sat quietly on this mountain peak.

Seeing that man's features, Yan Zhaoge recognised him as his clan's founder, the Heaven Establishing Old Man Qiu Yuan.

This scene was a record of the descended divine light. As Qiu Yuan comprehended the dao in silence, he gradually consolidated and created the process of the Clear Qi Profound Art.

The divine light was perhaps created by an aftershock of the power of some expert of the Divine Palace, or was perhaps descending wreckage from the destroyed Divine Palace.

As Yan Zhaoge approached the silhouette of that imprinted palm mark, the world before his eyes instantly turned black as it felt as though the very heavens and earth were about to collapse.

From viewing the faint marks left within, Yan Zhaoge's mind suddenly tensed as the scene within his mind changed, with him vaguely seeing the fragment of some object penetrating through layers upon layers of space, descending from the sky, falling into the Eight Extremities World.

Having obtained this thing, with it as a base, Qiu Yuan had created the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm.

While the revealed images were simple, Yan Zhaoge's very soul trembled, as he could feel that that fragment was very important.

Looking carefully over, as that fragment descended, directly above where it had fallen, a figure could vaguely be seen.

That fragment seemed not to have fallen by accident, instead having been intentionally thrown down by that person.

Only, it was a pity that these simple remnant images had stopped with Qiu Yuan creating the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm.

Yan Zhaoge was a little vexed.

After soothing his emotions, Yan Zhaoge pondered, “I’ve never heard anyone mention this fragment before. Was it that it was lost long ago, or that because it was too important, only the highest echelons of the clan know about it, perhaps even only being passed down amongst generations of Chiefs?”

Yan Zhaoge let out a long breath, calming his mind, “The mysteries have not been unravelled. The doubts have instead grown, just that I have obtained some clues as well as a direction.”

Temporarily burying these unsolvable doubts deep with his heart, Yan Zhaoge began carefully comprehending the profundities of the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm.

For some reason, Yan Zhaoge comprehended this supreme martial art much more smoothly than the Clear Qi Profound Art previously.

When everything was over, Yan Zhaoge slowly opened his eyes, bowing to Xin Dongping, “I have troubled Grand Uncle-Master.”

Directing a deep glance at Yan Zhaoge, Xin Dongping then shook his head, “It’s fine; return and cultivate diligently.”

As Yan Zhaoge left the Martial Repository, Ah Hu, along with Pan-Pan, was already waiting for him outside, flashing a simple and honest smile as he emerged, “Young Master, it’s done?”

“I’ve just swallowed it whole; I’ll slowly analyse and cultivate in it when we get back,” Yan Zhaoge waved his hands, “Let’s return now.”

Pan-Pan flew over once again. This time, Yan Zhaoge didn’t stop him, as he hugged this giant furball.

The current Pan-Pan was close in size to the giant pandas of Yan Zhaoge’s memories. While he was still slightly larger, at least he wasn’t like before, rushing over with the momentum of a rampaging elephant.

Returning to his lodgings, Yan Zhaoge quietly cultivated.

One day, the dawn sun hanging overhead, as he emerged, Yan Zhaoge’s heart suddenly moved. Mentally calculating the date, he walked outside.

Following behind it, Ah Hu asked curiously, “Young Master, where are you going?”

Yan Zhaoge sighed, “To look for eldest apprentice-uncle. Today is the death anniversary of senior apprentice-brother Shi; I will also go to offer a stick of incense.”

Ah Hu blinked as he realised the situation. Not saying anything, he followed honestly behind Yan Zhaoge.

Proceeding along a mountain road, ascending a small hill, Yan Zhaoge saw two people standing there as expected.

A tall, authoritative man, precisely his eldest apprentice-uncle Shi Tie.

Behind him stood Xu Fei.

A solemn expression on his face, as Xu Fei saw Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu approach, he nodded lightly, completely without the open, relaxed smile that he usually had on.

Shi Tie swivelled his head, looking over, “Zhaoge is here? You are too kind.”

Yan Zhaoge bowed toward Shi Tie, “Eldest apprentice-uncle, stay your grief.”

Shi Tie’s expression was calm as always, “I’m fine.”

He looked forward once more, his gaze falling on a grave. While it was simple, its surroundings were remarkably clean, with no weeds about it whatsoever.

A tablet stood erect before the grave, on it engraved 'Grave of Beloved Son Shi Songtao.'

Beside this grave lay two others.

Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu were both completely silent. Tablets also stood before these two graves, revealing the identities of their owners, Shi Tie's daughter-in-law as well as grandson respectively.

The three graves were actually only graves which held articles of clothing, but this caused their hearts to be even more stifled, because when Shi Songtao's family of three had met danger, even their bones had not been found.

They stood silently behind Shi Tie. Sending one's own descendants off was always a massive tragedy.

Looking at Shi Songtao's engraved name, the figure of a handsome youth surfaced within Yan Zhaoge's mind, his features bearing a ninety percent resemblance to Shi Tie, the two virtually having been shaped of the same mold.

Yan Zhaoge had not personally interacted with this senior apprentice-brother Shi before. All of his understanding of him originated from the memories of his body's original owner.

Shi Songtao had been even older than Xu Fei. When his fame had resounded throughout the Eight Extremities World, with him hailed as a Heaven's favoured child of this generation of Broad

Creed Mountain, Yan Zhaoge had still been a child, just beginning his cultivation.

As opposed to the stern and serious Shi Tie, tough and upright, Shi Songtao had been a little more moderate, but the two were both similarly warm and caring people.

In their youth, Xu Fei and Yan Zhaoge had received a lot of care and guidance from this senior apprentice-brother.

At that time, Shi Songtao had been a high-spirited young man; having tied the knot with his lover, having a son early on, his life was blissful to the extreme.

Even Shi Tie had indulged in incomparable bliss those few years, smiles appearing much more often on his face.

But sadly, all of this was now part of the past.

As Shi Tie stood there, his entire person resembled a statue, as if he had been standing there for thousands of years.

HSSB 209: Golden Talisman Forming Qi, Opening Furnace To Forge Treasures

Shi Songtao had treated people warmly and with sincerity, being an extremely popular person. Every year, many old acquaintances of his arrived to pay their respects to him, just that by a tacit understanding, they all avoided the dawn.

Other than Shi Tie himself, only a direct disciple would accompany him to visit Shi Songtao's grave.

Yan Zhaoge thoughtfully coming here, Shi Tie naturally wouldn't refuse him.

After they offered up sticks of incense to Shi Songtao's family, Shi Tie said, "I appreciate your sentiments; you should go back to rest."

Yan Zhaoge and Xu Fei exchanged glances, before leaving with Ah Hu in tow.

On their way back, as Yan Zhaoge turned to look back, he saw Shi Tie still standing there silently.

Beside him, Xu Fei sighed, "Master still blames himself."

Yan Zhaoge also sighed along with him. As one of the few in the know, he understood the meaning in Xu Fei's words.

That year, when Shi Songtao's family of three had met danger, Shi Tie had actually had a chance to reinforce them. However, it just so happened that the situation had been critical at that time, with Broad Creed Mountain's interests being greatly at risk, and of everyone present, only Shi Tie had the ability to stop it.

Faced with this situation where he was pressured by both sides, Shi Tie finally still chose to protect the clan's interests. However, like this, he was unable to save his descendants in time, eventually having to send them off as their elder.

This was Shi Tie's greatest regret. The him whose conscience was always clear to the heavens and the earth, only felt guilt towards his own kin.

Up till now, while graves of clothes had been erected, Shi Tie had actually still not given up hope. Whenever there was a chance, he would travel to the place of that year to investigate, hoping against hope that Shi Songtao's family would still be amongst the living. After all, even now, he had not seen their remains.

Sadly, five years had passed without any findings whatsoever, his last hope also being extinguished little by little.

Xu Fei murmured, "If he could redo things, would Master make the same choice?"

He was speaking to himself, and not expecting Yan Zhaoge to answer. Yan Zhaoge walked silently by his side.

Xu Fei sighed, continuing, “Despite his grief, despite his self-blame, despite his feelings of guilt, it is possible that he would still make the same choice, isn’t it. Master, he...”

Yan Zhaoge asked softly, “If it were you, senior apprentice-brother Xu, bearing that responsibility, between you and your kin, who would you choose?”

Xu Fei was silent for a long time before he answered, “I don’t know; perhaps I would only be able to give an answer to this when truly facing such a situation.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, the two no longer speaking as they walked side by side. Reaching a split in the road, they cupped their fists towards each other, taking their leaves as they returned to their individual lodgings.

There, Yan Zhaoge sat in the meditative position, closing his eyes and calming his heart as he wallowed in his thoughts.

After a while, Yan Zhaoge reopened his eyes, taking out a golden talisman.

This golden talisman had been obtained by Yan Zhaoge at Clear Concealed Lake after killing the fallen Xie Ziyi within the devilish domain.

Looking at the profound, complicated patterns on the golden

talisman, Yan Zhaoge considered earnestly, “It seems to be a somewhat strange, uncommon kind of writing. It should be something that only appeared after the Great Calamity.”

Yan Zhaoge laughed bitterly. Like the relics left behind by the Glacial Dragon Martial Saint, these things that had only appeared following the Great Calamity yet could still be considered ancient caused him to feel the most helpless, as this was the period of time he knew the least about.

However, Yan Zhaoge was also working on bolstering his deficiencies in this area. Currently looking at the golden talisman, it was not he was completely clueless.

“It looks a little like the writing of the extreme north, used only by a small amount of people who resided there?”

After analysing it for a moment, Yan Zhaoge instructed his followers, “Appropriate some books regarding the old texts of the north of the Gold Region for me. Take as many as you can, the older the better.”

Of the Thunder Domain’s six regions, the northernmost that was directly bordered to the Extreme North Ice Sea was the Gold Region.

Very quickly, black-clothed martial practitioners sent over the things Yan Zhaoge wanted.

After poring through the books for a while, Yan Zhaoge gradually formed an idea within his heart. Lightly tapping on that golden talisman with his finger, his fingertips cut out several marks, adding to the patterns on it.

Those marks remained on the surface of the golden talisman, not dissipating for a long time.

Yan Zhaoge retracted his finger, scrutinising the almost complete patterns on the golden talisman a final time before clapping down on it with a single palm.

The golden talisman suddenly erupted with a dazzling light, actually transforming into specks of fluorescent light as it vanished without a trace.

Seeing this, Yan Zhaoge instead revealed a satisfied smile. Next, he saw those specks of golden light drift about, condensed rather than dissipating as they transformed into a mist-like state, hovering within the air.

Sucking in a deep breath, resembling a great whale sucking in water, all that mist was instantly inhaled by him.

For that one moment, Yan Zhaoge's lungs felt like they were blazing with smoke and fire.

With Yan Zhaoge's current cultivation realm, his internal organs had all experienced countless tempering by his aura-qi.

The uncomfortable feeling lasted but a moment, fading very quickly.

Looking within his body, Yan Zhaoge saw those specks of golden light drift about unceasingly, applying themselves uniformly to the surface of all his blood vessels, seemingly applying a golden lustre over each and every one of them.

Even the smallest, tiniest blood vessel was no exception.

Yan Zhaoge calmly inhaled and exhaled, circulating his qi and blood, the flowing of his blood resembling the roiling of scalding lava as heavy roars resounded.

After circulating his aura-qi through thirty-six cycles, Yan Zhaoge halted his cultivation, the faint golden light on the surface of his skin disappearing in a flash.

Standing up, Yan Zhaoge stroked his lower chin, “Some things, seem like they can be brought forward.”

Thinking thus, Yan Zhaoge waved his hands, several lights flickering into existence as they hovered within the air. They were the low-grade spirit artifacts he possessed.

Lofty Mountain Armour, Incinerating Light Sword, Vapour Sealing Sword, Radiant Sun Wheel, Purple Gold Thunder Sword, Flying Thunder Sabre.

Aside from the mid-grade spirit artifact, the Hidden Clear Sunlight Sabre, as well as the Jade Dragon Sword which had always been Yan Zhaoge's accompanying spirit artifact, the low-grade spirit artifacts which Yan Zhaoge possessed were basically all here.

Speaking of it, they were all the signature weapons of core, direct disciples of the other Sacred Grounds.

Their original owners were Liu Shengfeng, Zhao Hao, Xie Ziyi, Xiao Shen, Yan Shan and Lin Zhou respectively.

Just looking at this namelist and these spirit artifacts, it would already be enough to let martial practitioners of the same generation sigh in great admiration.

If Yan Zhaoge decided to hold an exhibition for his spoils of war, there would probably be many who would be angered to the point of spitting out blood.

With Yan Zhaoge's current cultivation, he could actually only wield a single low-grade spirit artifact at once. The extras could either be switched out to use, used as hidden weapons as their connection were broken off for a moment's explosive power, or used to entangle an opponent's spirit artifact.

Having many spirit artifacts, directly slamming the opponent into death-this was not simply a joke.

When Yan Zhaoge ascended into the Martial Grandmaster realm, these spirit artifacts could then be wielded by him simultaneously.

However, Yan Zhaoge had other thoughts, though with his cultivation speed, he was not far from the Martial Grandmaster realm.

After considering for a moment more, Yan Zhaoge lightly tapped out with his fingers, keeping the Lofty Mountain Armour, the Radiant Sun Wheel and the Flying Thunder Sabre, only leaving behind those three swords, the Incinerating Light Sword, the Vapour Sealing Sword and the Purple Gold Thunder Sword.

After that, he flipped his palm, a bamboo branch appearing within it.

It was a dark green bamboo branch that flickered faintly with a purple light.

Opening the Internal Crystal Furnace, Yan Zhaoge placed that bamboo branch and the three low-grade spirit artifacts within.

HSSB 210: The Fourth Extreme Yin Bout

The Internal Crystal Furnace rumbled, overflowing with streams of light.

The furnace was actually circulating very slowly internally, enveloped by numerous clouds as it was impossible to clearly see what was happening within.

Yan Zhaoge appeared especially serious as he operated the Internal Crystal Furnace.

At the same time, he was also especially patient. He wanted to forge for himself a treasure purely created by him that stemmed completely from his intentions, compatible with his martial abilities.

Yan Zhaoge already had an idea of it within his heart, as he sought perfection as much as possible. This was not something that he could expect to complete in a single go.

Regarding this, Yan Zhaoge was neither panicked nor harried as in the midst of the forging process, he unceasingly fine-tuned and improved on his original thoughts based on the actual results seen.

In the days that followed, Yan Zhaoge's days were extremely fulfilling, as he either worked on martial cultivation to raise his strength, on the studying of formation principles, or on the forging of his treasure with the Internal Crystal Furnace.

As time whizzed by, a few months had already passed.

Over this period of time, Yan Zhaoge spent nearly all of his time holed up working on his endeavours. It wasn't until just before the season when the Black Nightmare Storm of the Great Western Desert weakened that he finally emerged.

“Ah Hu, help me to contact our clan's people in the Wind Domain, getting ready some necessities beforehand,” Yan Zhaoge stretched his body lazily, with Ah Hu nodding, then leaving to carry out his task.

Squinting, Yan Zhaoge raised his head to look into the forest, rays of sunlight penetrating through the gaps between the branches and the leaves.

“The Fourth Extreme Yin Bout should already have ended. I wonder what the result was?” Murmuring to himself, Yan Zhaoge pondered as he walked.

In the Fourth Extreme Yin Bout, Broad Creed Mountain had still remained on the sidelines, not participating.

While Feng Yunsheng's Extreme Yin Physique had already been restored, she was still in the midst of cultivation.

Not only Yan Zhaoge, even Fu Enshu and the other higher echelon experts of Broad Creed Mountain, while greatly feeling the

urgency of the situation, did not ask Feng Yunsheng to participate in the Fourth Extreme Yin Bout by a tacit understanding.

The reason being that Feng Yunsheng still needed more time to make up for the two years she had missed.

Her opponents were also improving, similarly giving it their all to progress rapidly, and not staying where they were waiting for her to catch up.

As Yan Zhaoge pondered, he came to the little valley which Feng Yunsheng resided in.

There, as expected, he saw Feng Yunsheng cultivating diligently and painstakingly as always.

Her sabre-wielding hand was always stable, but within the depths of her gaze, there seemed to be flames surging, getting hotter and hotter as she drove herself onwards.

Outsiders would generally find it very hard to understand the kind of strength that someone who had once lost everything — plummeting to the bottom of the lowest valley, before rising again like a phoenix— could erupt with.

Feng Yunsheng's will and resolve were all the best of the best, all of the pressure on her being transformed into motivation as she continued pushing herself beyond her limits.

Even while she had temporarily not been dispatched by Broad Creed Mountain to participate in Extreme Yin Bouts, she could also understand why as she just worked even harder in raising her abilities.

Yan Zhaoge stood silently where he was, looking at Feng Yunsheng cultivating in martial arts.

On the other side, another person was cultivating in martial arts in a methodical manner.

This was a child who was still not even twelve, yet had already refined his qi into aura-qi, stepping into the Martial Scholar realm!

Ying Longtu had successfully broken the record set by Yan Zhaoge's father Yan Di, becoming the youngest recorded Martial Scholar of the entire Eight Extremities World following the time of the Great Calamity.

The current Ying Longtu was fully focused, his gaze flickering with an intelligence that usually could not be seen within, cultivating without the slightest sign of fatigue whatsoever, his level of concentration not inferior to Feng Yunsheng by the side in the least.

It was only at times like this where he didn't seem as slow as he usually was.

Accompanied by his punches, the qi and blood of his robust body

surged, far surpassing many martial practitioners of the same cultivation level.

Yan Zhaoge smiled as he watched the two cultivating. In the distance, the giant panda Pan-Pan was currently seated on the ground, extremely bored, stuffing food inside his mouth. Seeing Yan Zhaoge now, his eyes instantly lit up as he ran over towards him.

“Following junior apprentice-sister Feng, your stomach has been blessed,” Yan Zhaoge smiled as he hugged Pan-Pan, stroking his huge head.

Feng Yunsheng’s small black dog Little Meaty had long since gotten close to Yan Zhaoge. While she didn’t rush over like Pan-Pan, she also wagged her small tail happily.

Finishing with his fist-technique, Ying Longtu retracted his stance. Seeing Yan Zhaoge, his eyes also lit up, heading over towards him as he smiled somewhat shyly, “Senior apprentice-brother Yan.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “Have you met with any problems in your cultivation?”

Scratching his head, Ying Longtu worked hard to consolidate his thoughts, “Before, I heard a senior apprentice-brother say that it is hard to achieve both speed and power at the same time, he used Infinite Boundless Mountain and the Heavenly Thunder Hall as a comparison. However, to me, it just felt like he was wrong

somewhere.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled. This Han Long'er was frank indeed, just that he did not know why he had not promptly brought up this query to that senior apprentice-brother.

“What he says is right, whilst also wrong,” Yan Zhaoge explained, “Purely saying that it is hard to achieve both speed and power at the same time is not accurate. Punching out with your fist, as long as your fist is fast, the power contained within it will not be low.”

“People often say that the Heavenly Thunder Hall's attacks are as fast as flashing lightning and like the descent of thunderbolts. The first half is speaking of its high speed, while the second half praises its fierce attacks.”

Yan Zhaoge raised his palm, pushing forward, “However, when we strike, it is always connected to the matter of force exertion. Only with force both accumulated and exerted is an attack truly launched.”

“But in the process of accumulating and exerting force, one would have to make a choice between speed and power. In most situations, the more ample the accumulated force, the fiercer the exerted force, just that the time required will also be longer.”

Yan Zhaoge looked at Ying Longtu, “It is often said that Infinite Boundless Mountain and the Heavenly Thunder Hall walk extreme paths-the split between them actually lies here.”

Ying Longtu nodded rather dazedly, “It is in the entire process of exerting force where the choice between speed and power lies, with speed not being an entity independent of the exerted force.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “That’s right. Rather than saying that the difference between Infinite Boundless Mountain and the Heavenly Thunder Hall lies in the speed of their techniques, it might as well be said that there is a difference in the speeds at which their techniques are executed.”

“In terms of style in power, both of them walk roads of toughness, with the Heavenly Thunder Hall’s attacks being more violent, and Infinite Boundless Mountain’s more forceful.”

As the two talked, Ah Hu arrived within the valley, his face wide in an open grin as he came up to Yan Zhaoge.

“Young Master, I have already contacted the Wind Domain’s side as you instructed,” Following his normal report, Ah Hu then said happily, “Also, the results of the Fourth Extreme Bout are out-the Sacred Sun Clan’s Meng Wan failed!”

Yan Zhaoge raised his brows slightly, “Speak more specifically of this.”

Ah Hu smiled happily, “A problem seemed to crop up with Meng Wan herself, with her meeting defeat in the final round of the Bout.”

Yan Zhaoge knit his brows slightly, “Did our clan’s spectating Elder bring back a recording of it?”

Ah Hu nodded, “Yes.”

Watching the scenes of the battle play out for real, not only did Yan Zhaoge not rejoice, his expression instead turned grave, “What I had feared has truly happened-the worst case scenario has surfaced.”

HSSB 211: Feng Yunsheng's Resolve

Watching the recorded silhouetted scene, Yan Zhaoge had a seldom seen sombre expression on his face.

Yan Zhaoge and Broad Creed Mountain's higher echelons had all not let Feng Yunsheng participate in the fourth Extreme Yin Bout.

The past two years had been left free for Feng Yunsheng to chase after the other Maidens of Extreme Yin, whom she had fallen behind.

She especially needed to make up for her gap with the Sacred Sun Clan's Meng Wan.

Although using various methods, Yan Zhaoge had helped her to improve by leaps and bounds, the Sacred Sun Clan's Meng Wan was originally also not a lamp who lacked oil, at least having held the Extreme Yin Crown for two years.

The Extreme Yin Crown had a major bolstering effect to the cultivation of Maidens of Extreme Yin that could not be ignored.

If she wanted to secure victory in an Extreme Yin Bout, Feng Yunsheng needed patience, needed to work hard, needed more time.

Her participating in the Extreme Yin Bout was to win, and not to serve as mere accompaniment.

If she was first, it would mean a Sacred Artifact. If she wasn't first, there would be nothing at all.

Although this was a cruel reality, it was the true face of the Extreme Yin Bout.

Following their discussions, Yan Zhaoge, Fu Enshu and the others had decided only to let Feng Yunsheng participate from the next Extreme Yin Bout onwards.

Before that, they could only still their hearts and lie dormant in patience.

Actually, in Yan Zhaoge's projections, in the next Extreme Yin Bout, the fifth Extreme Yin Bout, Feng Yunsheng still wouldn't stand much of a winning chance. It was more for her to accumulate some experience of clashing with other Maidens of Extreme Yin.

Luckily, the time required was not too long, and Broad Creed Mountain could still afford to wait. It was only that the pressure was still not small, what with the current volatile situation at hand.

What Yan Zhaoge and Broad Creed Mountain were especially concerned about was the fact that the Sacred Sun Clan's East Coming Martial Saint Huang Guanglie could emerge from seclusion at any time.

If Huang Guanglie emerged, also having successfully improved, it would put an extreme pressure on Broad Creed Mountain.

Also, the end of Clear Concealed Lake's incident did not mean that the Decimating Abyss and the Nine Underworlds would lower their flags and cease their drums just like this.

Therefore, time was still very limited. However, by Yan Zhaoge's projections, if nothing major happened, the sixth Extreme Yin Bout would be Feng Yunsheng's chance to shine.

However, something major had happened.

The major change was not in Feng Yunsheng and Broad Creed Mountain, but in others.

When clashing with Lin Zhou previously, Lin Zhou had revealed his knowledge of Feng Yunsheng's background, even knowing of Yan Zhaoge making use of Cloud Portent Mountain's Yin Yang Cloud Spring to help to restore her Extreme Yin Physique.

Having a general idea of Lin Zhou's background within his heart, Yan Zhaoge had always been curious about how Lin Zhou had known about the matter regarding Feng Yunsheng.

By Yan Zhaoge's projections, if he had not gotten involved, Feng Yunsheng would most likely not have entered Broad Creed Mountain. If she had still managed to escape the pursuit of the

Sacred Sun Clan then, she would most likely have joined Jade Sea City.

She had been in the Sacred Sun Clan before, and had been one of its Maidens of Extreme Yin as well, but her Extreme Yin Physique having been destroyed being known by the entire world could still be understood.

However, how did Lin Zhou know of Yan Zhaoge's yin-yang coexisting technique with which he had helped Feng Yunsheng to regain her Extreme Yin Physique?

Did Jade Sea City possess a similar technique?

Or was it that Lin Zhou had come up with such a method himself?

It was fine if it was the latter-Yan Zhaoge would not actually be worried by that. What he was worried of was someone else having come up with this technique, and it coming to be known by Lin Zhou from there.

It was fine if just Lin Zhou knew of it-the Heavenly Thunder Hall's Maiden of Extreme Yin was not very strong. The most important thing was who this method's original owner had been in that timeline.

It was fine if it was Jade Sea City, but the worst thing was that it was most possible that it had actually been the Sacred Sun Clan

who had managed to research out this method.

Firstly, they cultivated in the pure yang energy of the sun; they had a deep level of research in it, and understood the principle of things only being able to move the opposite direction once they reached an extreme, possessing common principles with Yan Zhaoge's methods. Secondly, they were the Sacred Ground who had held the Extreme Yin Crown for the longest time.

Even though they lacked information left behind from before the Great Calamity, through the painstaking research of their experts accumulated over time, the Sacred Sun Clan could also possibly attain results in this area.

This was something that Yan Zhaoge had always kept in mind.

And now, his worst predictions had come true.

Carefully looking at Meng Wan's battle with another, Yan Zhaoge could tell that a problem had indeed come up with her, but not like in the second Extreme Yin Bout, when she had been injured.

Instead, she had been affected by attempting a yin-yang coexisting technique that was not developed sufficiently.

Even while the Sacred Sun Clan and the Heavenly Thunder Hall were allies, it was impossible that Lin Zhou would have revealed such techniques to the Sacred Sun Clan.

Moreover, the Heavenly Thunder Hall's Maiden of Extreme Yin indeed showed the same symptoms as well, just that they were not as visible as Meng Wan's.

This proved that Lin Zhou actually just knew of the existence of yin-yang coexisting techniques, without understanding it in detail. The Heavenly Thunder Hall had also only started experimenting down this route recently.

While the Sacred Sun Clan could still not match up to Yan Zhaoge's methods, they were already on the right track.

Unlike last time's accident, Meng Wan losing the Extreme Yin Crown this time was within the Sacred Sun Clan's range of predictions as an acceptable loss.

Lying temporarily dormant was to secure a definite advantage along with domination in the future.

It could be predicted that having lost the Extreme Yin Crown once more, with Huang Guanglie yet to leave seclusion, the Sacred Sun Clan would at least retain a conservative stance for the next year.

However, when they raised their heads once more, they would erupt with even more terrifying power.

Moreover, the one who had won the fourth Extreme Yin Bout

being a disciple of the strictly neutral Turbid Wave Pavilion, the pressure on the Sacred Sun Clan would also be less.

Speaking of which, this was also the first time a Turbid Wave Pavilion disciple had participated in the Extreme Yin Bout, the result being her winning the Crown on her first attempt. Although this was also due to a problem having cropped up with Meng Wan, being able to suppress the Maidens of Extreme Yin of Jade Sea City, Infinite Boundless Mountain and the Heavenly Thunder Hall, she must have prepared for many years, aiming to shock everyone on her debut.

While Turbid Wave Pavilion was strictly neutral, facing the direct threat of the Flame Devils on the East Sea like Jade Sea City, obtaining the Extreme Yin Crown would be of great help to them.

However, if no unexpected incidents occurred, it would be just this once.

Next year, her preparations complete, Meng Wan would mostly likely play out the role of the ruler returning for her crown once more.

Yan Zhaoge's brows gradually knit up, "It's really bad this time..."

Amidst his thoughts, Feng Yunsheng kept her sabre over by the other side, smiling and greeting Yan Zhaoge upon noticing his presence, "Senior apprentice-brother Yan."

Yan Zhaoge instantly relaxed, smiling as he praised, “Nice sabrework.”

Feng Yunsheng glanced at Yan Zhaoge, “Senior apprentice-brother Yan, are the results of the fourth Extreme Yin Bout already out? Was it still Little Wan who won?”

Yan Zhaoge shook his head, “No.”

As Feng Yunsheng was slightly taken aback, Yan Zhaoge sighed, “However, it is even worse than Meng Wan securing a consecutive victory.”

After Yan Zhaoge explained the matter clearly, Feng Yunsheng’s expression turned grave, but her emotions remained calm.

She held the hilt of her sabre, “I will work harder, definitely!”

While her resolve was firm, Feng Yunsheng also did not find the situation optimistic, just working the hardest that she could.

Having always been strong and independent, not willing to rely on others, Feng Yunsheng revealed a look of expectation for the first time as she gazed at Yan Zhaoge, “Senior apprentice-brother Yan, do you still have any other methods?”

Yan Zhaoge’s eyelids drooped, “...No.”

Feng Yunsheng looked calmly at Yan Zhaoge, not speaking. The two looked at each other silently.

After a long time, Feng Yunsheng said lightly, “Senior apprentice-brother Yan, I admit that I am unresigned, having extravagant hopes, having fantasies.

“But at this stage, in wanting to win the Extreme Yin Bout, it is no longer bjust a personal matter for me.”

“For the clan which took me in, for the Master who educates me, for you, senior apprentice-brother Yan, who stood up and guaranteed for me then, I must definitely win!”

Feng Yunsheng looked straight at Yan Zhaoge, “No matter the method, I am also willing to try it. No matter how tough and painful it might be, I am also willing to bear it...no, I definitely have to be able to bear it!”

HSSB 212: Yan Zhaoge's Method

Looking at Feng Yunsheng, from her gaze, Yan Zhaoge did not see heat temporarily rushing to her brain, instead seeing a cold yet decisive firmness.

Feng Yunsheng said, pausing with each word, "My own choice, I will be responsible."

"There is indeed a method," Yan Zhaoge was silent for a while before he said slowly.

Yan Zhaoge was not a hypocritical person, he was not making things difficult for Feng Yunsheng in wanting her to propose it for herself.

This time, while he still had a plan, he really didn't want to use it.

"You shouldn't rush to make the decision," Yan Zhaoge shook his head slowly, "Have you ever heard of Cold Marrow Needles?"

Seeing Feng Yunsheng's uncomprehending expression, Yan Zhaoge said, "It is normal for you not to have heard of it. But Soul Lighting Lamps, you should have heard of those, right?"

Feng Yunsheng had indeed heard of those, "It is a rumoured torture method from before the Great Calamity, causing people to wish for death yet not able to have it come, forever suffering

indescribable torment.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded before shooting Feng Yunsheng a deep glance, “Before the Great Calamity, Cold Marrow Needles and Soul Lighting Lamps were both part of the Seven Great Tortures.”

“Cold Marrow Needles -this method causes extreme coldness from the marrows of one’s bones. However, the coldness will not lead to numbness, instead inflicting a pain like billions of sharp needles piercing simultaneously.”

“In suffering the torture, one would always remain in a conscious state, not even able to faint if they wanted to.”

Yan Zhaoge said softly, “This is not something that can be suffered through with clenched teeth through firm willpower alone, because not just the fleshly body, thousands of holes would also be pierced in the soul of the one suffering it. And despite the feeling of weakness, one would not die, forever being tortured, every moment and every instant, both internally and externally, in every single part of the body.”

“In saying every single part of the body, it is not like if I pricked you with thousands of needles. It is not that every pore or every acupoint would feel the piercing; there would be no respite in any part of the body, and this pain would emanate everywhere from within the body itself.”

Yan Zhaoge’s gaze swept over Feng Yunsheng, “Some parts of the human body are more resilient, while some parts are especially

weak. For example, the eyeballs and such.”

“However, Cold Marrow Needles would not care about those, taking care of every single part of your body. Therefore, the weaker the place, the more the pain that would be felt.”

Feng Yunsheng quietly listened to Yan Zhaoge’s narration.

Yan Zhaoge continued slowly, “Then, because of your Extreme Yin Physique, the pain you feel from the Cold Marrow Needles would only be more intense than for the average person.”

“This method would indeed strengthen your Extreme Yin Physique, even accelerating your day to day cultivation through it, causing your cultivation speed to increase a step further. However, the precondition is that you would first have to be able to tolerate the pain it causes.”

Having finished, Yan Zhaoge closed his mouth, not saying a word.

He had never intended to use this method from the start, rather preferring Feng Yunsheng’s speed of improvement be a little slower, waiting for one or two more years.

Even after knowing that the Sacred Sun Clan was also trying to raise Meng Wan’s strength through a yin-yang coexisting technique, Yan Zhaoge actually still hadn’t considered this method, instead trying to think of other paths.

Even Yan Zhaoge himself wasn't absolutely confident of being able to withstand this method.

"I am willing to try," As soon as Yan Zhaoge had finished speaking, Feng Yunsheng answered calmly.

As Yan Zhaoge looked at her, Feng Yunsheng smiled, "At present, there are no other methods left, right?"

"Time and tide waits for no man. If senior apprentice-brother Yan has a better method, that would naturally be best, but before you come up with one, let me first try these Cold Marrow Needles."

With Feng Yunsheng having lost two years of her time, Meng Wan, as the most outstanding Maiden of Extreme Yin, was far ahead of her.

With Meng Wan also currently using a yin-yang coexisting technique to strengthen herself, Feng Yunsheng's and Broad Creed Mountain's hopes of catching up to her instantly became more distant.

The two's starting points were just far too far apart, with both also currently progressing. Feng Yunsheng's rate of improvement would have to be much greater than Meng Wan's in order to catch up with her.

Otherwise, however high her speed, it still being limited, who knew when she would be able to catch up.

With the current volatile situation, not much time remained for her and Broad Creed Mountain.

She pursed her lips, “Senior apprentice-brother Yan, despite how confident I look now, I am actually also not confident of truly being able to withstand it.”

“It is, as you say, one of the Seven Great Tortures ah, their original meaning if not to torture, probably to force out a confession or to inflict a fate worse than death. If it could be withstood so easily, how could it still be considered a Great Torture?”

“Still, I want to try.”

Feng Yunsheng sucked in a deep breath, her gaze ever determined, “I want to win the Extreme Yin Bout. However tough or painful it may be, I must also bear it, I must also persevere.”

Yan Zhaoge was silent for a long time before he nodded, “Fine.”

A smile appeared on Feng Yunsheng’s face, “Don’t tell Master and the others first.”

Yan Zhaoge sighed, “Fine.”

A decision having been made, the tense atmosphere finally eased a little.

As the two had conversed earlier, there had seemed to be a formless barrier enveloping their surroundings, causing others to instinctively avoid drawing near.

The atmosphere having eased now, Little Meaty instantly ran over to Feng Yunsheng joyfully.

However, just having run halfway, a massive black shadow suddenly flashed past, drawing up a gale which nearly blew over the small black dog.

With a speed even faster than Little Meaty, Pan-Pan rushed over before Feng Yunsheng, his eyes blinking repeatedly.

As a true glutton, his appetite had been caught by Feng Yunsheng over this past period of time.

Feng Yunsheng shook her head, laughing. She stroked Pan-Pan's head, then waved Little Meaty over.

Little Meaty leapt up, jumping into Feng Yunsheng's embrace.

She first stretched comfortably, then bared her teeth towards Pan-Pan, finally twisting her head away very proudly, no longer

looking at Pan-Pan.

Black rings around his eyes, Pan-Pan first looked at Little Meaty's size, then lowered his head to look at himself.

Shaking his huge head, he called out lightly, white fire and black water surfacing about his body, enveloping him within.

The next moment, the water and fire dissipated, the Pan-Pan who had originally been the size of a normal panda having shrunk once more.

His appearance still of that of a grown panda, he had not returned to a furless panda cub, just that his size had decreased considerably, to around the same size as Little Meaty.

After that, Pan-Pan let out a joyful cry, his chubby body resembling a small furball as he leapt up from the ground, also leaping into Feng Yunsheng's embrace.

Little Meaty instantly stared, looking at her mistress nervously, her eyes full of helplessness.

Shaking her head and sighing, Feng Yunsheng cuddled the two of them, one in each arm.

Seeing this scene, Yan Zhaoge's mind drifted a little.

A thought sprung up very suddenly within his heart.

If he were a little stronger, a little more able, possessing a few more methods.

If he could let this bright, strong girl, even not having to do anything, just happily accompany Pan-Pan and Little Meaty in playing, afterwards putting on that Extreme Yin Crown, how great would that be...

Yan Zhaoge shook his head slightly, stabilising his mind once more, his thoughts no longer drifting.

He could not help but laugh, “Something completely given by others, not having had to put in any effort for it at all. I think she would instead be a little desolate at that.”

Looking at Feng Yunsheng, Yan Zhaoge shook his head lightly, “While it is said that the heavens reward the diligent, those who work hard are not always rewarded. I have truly seen such matters too many times.”

“However, you-you will wear the Extreme Yin Crown.”

HSSB 213: Improving By Leaps And Bounds

Cold Marrow Needles were not actual needles that were used to prick people, but a special technique, reinforced by special medicines, that caused a change in one's qi and blood, causing extreme cold to emanate from within, with it being an omnipresent chill on every single part of the entire body, causing pain reminiscent of being pierced by needles.

Feng Yunsheng was a straightforward and decisive person. Since she wanted to try, to bear it, that she would.

Currently, wisps of incomparably cold white qi were shockingly being emanated from her entire body, as she seemed to have been completely covered by a layer of frost.

Anything and everything that touched her body would be frozen upon contact.

However, in truth, for its effectiveness, the Cold Marrow Needles technique would seal most of the cold qi within one's body. The part that leaked out would only be a tiny portion of it.

At this time, due to Feng Yunsheng's qi and blood having been thrown in disorder, it was very difficult for her to circulate her qi to withstand it.

Under such circumstances, the pain that she was suffering could only be imagined.

Also, her mind would always remain clear and her sense acute, to the effect of magnifying the pain brought to her by the Cold Marrow Needles by several times.

Having originally been in the meditative position, Feng Yunsheng was now already completely unable to maintain her posture, only able to lie on her side on the ground, unconsciously curling up her body into a ball.

Clenching her teeth and not uttering a sound was already the final determination that she could show.

Yan Zhaoge stood before her, looking expressionlessly at this scene.

Ah Hu also stood by the side, looking at Feng Yunsheng with a solemn expression on his face as he now let out a breath, “Young Master, Miss Feng really is great.”

Yan Zhaoge didn’t say a word, repeatedly calculating the time within his heart.

Ying Longtu, Pan-Pan and Little Meaty waited by the side, looks of horror in their gazes. Even while Feng Yunsheng had already communicated this with them beforehand, they currently still possessed the urge to rush up to her.

“That’s enough for today; more would do more harm than good.”

Finally, Yan Zhaoge let out a low yell, a palm flashing like lightning onto Feng Yunsheng's back.

Feng Yunsheng's body trembled, the cold qi surging within her body finally beginning to vanish, the frost gradually dispersing.

Not even uttering a sound, she directly fainted.

To those who had experienced the torture of Cold Marrow Needles, losing their consciousness was actually also a blissful thing.

Yan Zhaoge's palm on Feng Yunsheng's back had still not relaxed, as he unceasingly helped to moderate the condition of her body's qi and blood.

If one were really to carry out Cold Marrow Needles torture, even if it was stopped midway, such care would not be taken.

Yan Zhaoge's current actions were to not let Feng Yunsheng suffer needless pain. In paying such a huge price, it was to see gains, to see rewards.

At the same time, he also didn't blindly help Feng Yunsheng to gain warmth. If he focused fully on expelling the cold, it would instead decrease what she gained through her sacrifice, wasting her efforts.

It was a long time before Feng Yunsheng awoke. Although the pain had yet to fade completely, it was already at a level that she could bear.

Feng Yunsheng didn't say anything excessive, getting into the meditative position once more, breathing deeply as she moderated her body's qi and blood as guided by Yan Zhaoge.

“Although it was hard to the point of feeling like dying, instantaneous effects truly can be seen,” After ceasing her cultivation, Feng Yunsheng revealed a smile that contained a bit of weakness.

Yan Zhaoge said, “With the Extreme Yin Scripture as a base, using the Yin-Yang Coexisting technique, with the boost of the Cold Marrow Needles technique, in coordination with other supplementary techniques, whether it is your Extreme Yin power or your cultivation base, they will both improve by leaps and bounds.”

Shooting Feng Yunsheng a deep glance, Yan Zhaoge said, “This technique can be used for however long you can persist. Even if the time is limited, the effects will also be very prominent.”

Feng Yunsheng smiled, “Although, it really was pretty hard, I will persist all the way, giving it my all.”

Yan Zhaoge no longer said anything, just nodding, “At this moment, you are in a rather weak state. Cultivating diligently would instead bring harm to your body; you should go get some

good rest.”

“Calm your mind, do not be impatient.”

Hugging Little Meaty who rushed towards her, Feng Yunsheng answered, “Rest easy, senior apprentice-brother Yan. I understand.”

Pan-Pan also came over, Feng Yunsheng smiling as she stroked his head.

Standing by the side, Ying Longtu asked somewhat uncertainly, “Senior apprentice-sister, are you okay?”

Feng Yunsheng smiled, “Rest easy, Han Long’er. I’m fine.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “After resting, you can resume your cultivation as per usual. It is not good for the Cold Marrow Needles technique to be used in too closely packed intervals. After having used it once, its effects do not come into bear within a short period of time; in your upcoming cultivation, you will also be digesting this time’s results.”

“I understand,” Feng Yunsheng nodded earnestly, saying as she looked at Yan Zhaoge, “Thank you, senior apprentice-brother Yan.”

Yan Zhaoge sighed softly, “It is mostly you.”

After parting ways with Feng Yunsheng, Yan Zhaoge returned to his lodgings, shaking his head slightly as he walked, “It’s really a bad coincidence this time; the Sacred Sun Clan had even the time of the Heavens on its side.”

The deeds of the Decimating Abyss and the Nine Underworlds, on a certain level, had caused the tense atmosphere between the Sacred Grounds to ease slightly somewhat.

For a considerable period of time, everyone would be keeping wary of the Decimating Abyss and the Nine Underworlds, also working to clear the spies that possibly existed amongst them.

A new common enemy other than the Flame Devils having been added to the mix, the contradictions between the Sacred Grounds had eased for the time being.

Having lost the Extreme Yin Crown at this time, as long as they kept more of a low profile, it actually wasn’t too great of a problem for the Sacred Sun Clan.

If not for the Decimating Abyss and the Nine Underworlds, Broad Creed Mountain, Infinite Boundless Mountain and Jade Sea City definitely could combine their forces, marching on the World Illuminating Peak together.

At the very least, they would force the Sacred Sun Clan’s Huang Guanglie to leave seclusion early, having yet to finish what he had set out to do.

However, with the current situation, this plan would be hard to carry out.

Not talking about anything else, because the Decimating Abyss had collaborated with the Flame Devil World earlier, for the past few months, the Flame Devils had been causing chaos on the East Sea, with it still yet to completely calm down even now.

Yan Zhaoge's gaze turned somewhat deep and distant, "Striking the hot iron still requires one to be tough ah. Hopefully father achieves results with the Heaven Returning Divine Pill quickly."

As he thought, Yan Zhaoge returned to his lodgings, also resuming his cultivation.

An ice-blue jade coin appeared within his hands. It was precisely that which Shi Tie had gained from seeking out the Glacial Dragon Martial Saint's legacy and brought back to Yan Zhaoge.

The pure, refined qi contained within the jade coin had almost been completely absorbed by Yan Zhaoge at this moment.

Clutching the jade coin, Yan Zhaoge circulated his aura-qi, absorbing the remnant pure, refined qi stored within.

The lustre on the jade coin's surface dimmed for good as the icy cold aura-qi within Yan Zhaoge's body grew stronger, the numerous ice dragons coiling within his acupoints roaring

unceasingly as they were strengthened.

The Glacial Dragon Bone Soul from before and the pure, refined qi within this jade coin had already been completely absorbed by Yan Zhaoge at this moment.

In terms of quality, it was inferior to the extreme hot fire qi that Yan Zhaoge had refined from the seed of Li Yan True Fire with the Sacred Heavenly Fire Scripture, but in terms of quantity, it was much more abundant.

Two powerful aura-qis, one cold, one hot, surged unceasingly within Yan Zhaoge's body, letting out what resembled the roars of dragons.

Within the qi ocean within Yan Zhaoge's dantian, the clear qi spread to the sides as the chaotic qi mass appeared, circulating ceaselessly with the power of ice and fire, causing the spirituality of his aura-qi to become more and more bountiful, as his control of it also became smoother and smoother.

In this less than half a year upon his return to the Mountain, cultivating ceaselessly as he kept mostly indoors and seldom emerged, Yan Zhaoge's cultivation base was also improving by leaps and bounds, as he prepared to break through to even higher levels!

HSSB 214: Stepping Into The Late Xiantian Stage!

Yan Zhaoge's aura-qi that resembled dragons surged, fire and ice intermingling, yin and yang in harmony.

His abundant aura-qi gradually changed, no longer blazing hot or icy cold, slowly becoming indistinct like that chaotic qi mass in Yan Zhaoge's dantian.

It seemed like it could tolerate all things, birth all things, exterminate all things.

Looking within his body, a hint of a smile appeared at the corners of Yan Zhaoge's lips.

As per his thoughts, the chaotic aura-qi within Yan Zhaoge's body abruptly shuddered, seeming to condense into a single drop.

The aura-qi moved through Yan Zhaoge's body as he willed it, moving smoothly and ceaselessly, in complete synchrony with his mind and thoughts.

At this moment, Yan Zhaoge's aura-qi was like an extension of his fleshly body, controlled by him like a finger on his arm, agglomerating and dispersing it as he liked.

Like the deep sea in its passivity, like thunderbolts in its activity.

Having refined the aura-qi to this stage, it was precisely the mark of a mid Xiantian Martial Scholar having broken through into the late Xiantian Martial Scholar realm!

As he willed it, that chaotic aura-qi instantly changed form, rapidly becoming an existence like blazing fire, burning plains and incinerating the heavens.

The next moment, his aura-qi had already turned icy cold, the scene of a land of ice and snow playing out.

The icy cold aura-qi split into two portions, one remaining unchanged, the other taking up the form of blazing fire once more.

Then, the two aura-qis circulated together, becoming vast clear qi, vast as the heavens, vast and boundless. It was precisely the force of Broad Creed Mountain's direct lineage Clear Qi Profound Art.

The numerous streams of clear qi were majestic and abundant, yet very quickly, one of them suddenly turned turbid, then sank downwards.

The turbid qi circulated within Yan Zhaoge's meridians, not showing any signs of roughness at all, instead seeming heavy as the great earth, in opposition to the clear qi above it.

Yan Zhaoge slowly nodded, "My earlier theories were correct."

As he pondered, the two aura-qis, one clear, one turbid, recombined as one, chaos re-emerging.

Yan Zhaoge stood up, letting out a long breath, his entire body's acupoints shuddering in unison as though there were innumerable powerful existences roaring together within.

“The Black Nightmare Storm has already weakened-it is time to head to the Great Western Desert.”

As Yan Zhaoge pondered, he left his lodgings, where he saw Ah Hu standing there facing the sun with his hands behind his back.

As it would normally appear, Ah Hu seemed to be just leisurely sunbathing.

However, with Yan Zhaoge's vision, he could see that Ah Hu's head was raising slightly with a very acute change in angles at a virtually indiscernible speed.

He remained like this, his brows facing the sun directly, as though they were connected by a formless line to the sun in the sky, directly piercing into the brain.

With the sun overhead, the horizon moved, its position changing every single second, every single moment, just that at any moment in time, it would seem not to be moving, due to the changes being extremely small.

But Ah Hu could acutely and accurately grasp the differences and changes within, adjusting the angle of his raised head to match.

Seeing Yan Zhaoge emerge, Ah Hu lowered his head, a simple and honest smile appearing on his face, “Young Master, you only went into seclusion for a few days this time.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “Results have already been achieved. Staying any longer would be a waste of time.”

Ah Hu’s eyes lit up, “Young Master, you have stepped into the late Xiantian Martial Scholar realm?”

Yan Zhaoge nodded whilst smiling, Ah Hu repeatedly sighing in praise, “It is really very fast ah; compared to Young Master, all of us are sluggish oxen and wooden horses.”

“Young Master, while you may not be in time to break Family Head’s record of the youngest Martial Grandmaster, in the Martial Scholar realm, your cultivation speed may very possibly surpass his.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly, “While I am also very satisfied with my progress this time, everything has to wait until I truly have reached the Martial Grandmaster realm.”

He looked at Ah Hu, “What of you-are you confident of your breakthrough?”

Ah Hu scratched his head, “It feels, like there is just still something lacking.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “It’s fine. After all, it has only been a year since you stepped into the Heavenly Connection stage. With your talent and potential, it should be the point of just being that last step away. Having broken through the bottleneck before you, it will be a whole new heaven and earth.”

Ah Hu laughed, “I feel the same; I should be able to catch up with Brother Fei and them very quickly.”

The young geniuses who had participated in the Heavenly Connection Meet had all gained much from the experience, the Nine Underworlds catastrophe afterwards also having served as a form of tempering for them.

After the Heavenly Connection Meet, in this less than half year where Yan Zhaoge had been cultivating in seclusion, the others had all also been cultivating diligently.

Xu Fei, Tang Yonghao and Song Chao, the trio having already long been Heavenly Connection Martial Scholars, had broken through their respective bottlenecks, stepping into the Martial Grandmaster realm.

Stepping from the Heavenly Connection stage into the Martial Grandmaster realm, those elites would naturally find numerous Martial Grandmaster experts before them.

At this level, as strong as they were, they had all become inexperienced younglings.

However, overcoming the massive gulf between the two realms, the eyes with which they were looked at by the public would also gradually change, no longer the gazes directed at disciples of the younger generation.

Moreover, in accordance to their ages as well as their talent and strength displayed at the same cultivation level, it could be foreseen that Xu Fei and the others still had a long, grand road ahead of them.

Having become Martial Grandmasters was but a new beginning for them, their futures incomparably bright.

It was like how a massive gulf also existed between the Body Refinement and Martial Scholar realms, depleting the lives of innumerable people.

From the Martial Scholar to the Martial Grandmaster realm also was a massive gulf, with many Martial Scholar experts having halted at the late Xiantian stage or Heavenly Connection stage, finding it hard to advance a single inch, the rest of their lives just passing on listlessly like this.

As the elites of the direct lineages of the various Sacred Grounds, Xu Fei and the others would naturally not be reduced to such a stage. However, able to become Martial Grandmasters just having

passed thirty was still a rare thing. As long as no major unforeseen circumstances cropped up, their futures were destined to be limitless.

Yan Zhaoge patted Ah Hu's shoulder, "Come, let us proceed to the Wind Domain. The various disasters of the Great Western Desert are currently in a comparatively weakened state."

After reporting to his father Yan Di and his Grand Master Yuan Zhengfeng, Yan Zhaoge left the Mountain with Ah Hu and his other retainers.

Other than then, because of the Cold Marrow Needles, Feng Yunsheng also travelled alongside him. After all, even Yan Zhaoge himself was not certain how long he would be away for this time.

Although the clan's Elders were rather worried of the off chance that something might happen to Feng Yunsheng, the cultivation of Maidens of Extreme Yin was similarly not something that could be accomplished through just staying in the depths of the Mountain and cultivating painstakingly alone. Finally, they had still allowed Feng Yunsheng to accompany him on his journey.

As for Yan Zhaoge, the clan's higher echelon experts now all had extreme faith in him.

Moreover, along their journey's route, other than in the Great Western Desert itself, it would all be on Broad Creed Mountain's territory, which had Broad Creed Mountain's experts sitting over it.

Leaving the Mountain, heading west from the Central Heaven Region to the West Heaven Region of the Heaven Domain's five regions, they continued westwards, leaving the territory of the Heaven Domain, arriving at the Sand Region of the Wind Domain's four Regions.

The Sand Region was currently also controlled by Broad Creed Mountain, specifically presided over by a First Seat Elder dispatched there.

Of the Wind Domain's four Regions, in terms of geography, they drew a line from north to south, simultaneously bordered to the Great Western Desert, together constituting the vast territory of the Wind Domain.

The Great Western Desert was virtually off limits for the living. Including Black Nightmare Mountain, the Wind Domain's Sacred Ground of the past, no one had been able to completely control it.

It was rumoured that it was a remnant of the force of the Great Calamity, therefore being filled with disasters and tribulations, even possessing destructive capabilities of extermination.

In their conquests, Broad Creed Mountain, the Sacred Sun Clan and Infinite Boundless Mountain mainly targeted the Wind Domain's Four Regions, keeping a respectful distance away from the Great Western Desert.

Yan Zhaoge, however, was rather interested in this place.

HSSB 215: The Yan Zhaoge Incomparable To The Past

Because of its natural climate, the scenery of the Wind Domain was completely different from that of the Heaven Domain. Having come here, it was the scene of a great desert all around.

It was not just the Great Western Desert; more than eighty percent of the Wind Domain was comprised of desert.

It was only that although much danger also existed in those other deserts, they were still not as bad as the Great Western Desert, which was virtually a godforsaken land.

Feng Yunsheng gazed far into the distance, “The last time I came to the Wind Domain, it was still a few years ago.”

Yan Zhaoge asked casually, “When in the Sacred Sun Clan, coming out for tempering?”

Feng Yunsheng was similarly casual, “Right, although as a Maiden of Extreme Yin, my movements had to be kept concealed with the utmost secrecy, some tempering still had to be experienced by me personally.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “Was it the Gan Region or the Qin Region?”

Before the War of the Eastern Tang, the Sacred Sun Clan’s

dominance had been great. In the Wind Domain, other than the Qin Region which was directly bordered to the Fire Domain, the Gan Region north of it had also been under the Sacred Sun Clan's control.

At that time, Broad Creed Mountain controlled the Sand Region north of the Gan Region, while Infinite Boundless Mountain controlled the northernmost Silver Region, the three Sacred Grounds dividing up the four Regions of the Wind Domain in this way.

In the War of the Eastern Tang, other than counterattacking the Fire Domain, they had similarly assaulted the Wind Domain.

In order to avoid disturbing Huang Guanglie, the Sacred Sun Clan had grit their teeth, taking several steps back.

Of the Qin Region and the Gan Region they had had control of in the Wind Domain, the Gan Region more to the north had completely fallen in Broad Creed Mountain's hands.

Only after the Third Extreme Bout, when Meng Wan had won the Extreme Yin Crown, did the Sacred Sun Clan managed to stabilise their footing, emboldened to try to regain the territory they had lost.

Their lost territory in the Fire Domain had basically been completely regained, but in the Wind Domain, Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan had ended up in a conflict over the Gan Region once more.

Afterwards, because Yan Zhaoge had drawn Infinite Boundless Mountain in with the Thunder Element Revival Art, the Heaven Domain, the Mountain Domain and the Water Domain joining hands, with the Heavenly Thunder Hall suffering a setback, the Sacred Sun Clan had been unable to sustain its forceful stance, having no choice but to end their campaign in the Wind Domain.

Currently, the Gan Region and the Sand Region, in the middle of the Wind Domain's four Regions, were both under Broad Creed Mountain's control. The Sacred Sun Clan could only retreat behind the southernmost Qin Region. Currently, able to ensure that the Qin Region was not lost, they should already be praising the heavens and the earth.

Feng Yunsheng answered, "The Gan Region is close to the border areas of the Great Western Desert."

Yan Zhaoge nodded. The Sacred Sun Clan also put in a lot of effort in grooming its disciples, willing to let them temper themselves, increasing their experience and knowledge with real sabres and real spears, stimulating their potential.

"Speaking of that, the Black Nightmare Mountain was destroyed by our clan. I wonder what state its remains are in now?" Feng Yunsheng suddenly realised, smiling as she asked.

The 'our clan' that she spoke of was naturally Broad Creed Mountain, and not the Sacred Sun Clan.

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly, “When our ancestor the Exalted Heaven Shaker was in secluded cultivation, the final Chief of Black Nightmare Mountain attacked my Broad Creed Mountain, that Zhang ‘Purple Sun’ of the Sacred Sun Clan also watching on greedily from the side.”

“In the end, the Exalted Heaven Shaker emerged from seclusion, slaying the Chief of Black Nightmare Mountain on the spot, then going to the Wind Domain, attacking Black Nightmare Mountain himself. From then on, the seven great Sacred Grounds numbered six.”

“Zhang ‘Purple Sun’ should feel lucky that he didn’t really do anything then, turning tail and running immediately after the Exalted Heaven Shaker emerged. Because of that, our ancestor only chased him into the mouth of a volcano and let things go just like that. Otherwise, it’s hard to say whether there would still be a Sacred Sun Clan now.”

The Purple Sun Martial Saint Zhang Chao was that Sacred Sun Saint, whether he was alive or dead still unknown today, whose legends circulated amongst the public, the most legendary, colourful expert in the history of the Sacred Sun Clan.

It was also precisely him who had led the Sacred Sun Clan in their rise to dominance after Broad Creed Mountain had suffered a great blow to its vitality, becoming the new number one Sacred Ground.

If not for the Heaven Diviner Zhan Xilou releasing his brilliance which had been concealed beneath his brother’s shadow before,

pressured by Zhang Chao and the Sacred Sun Clan, it would have been very difficult for Broad Creed Mountain to reach where they currently were today.

Feng Yunsheng had a look of remembrance on her face, “Ancestor Heaven Shaker had already presided over the entire Eight Extremities World with his power, and there was still Ancestor Heaven Diviner deeply concealed beside him. Our clan was truly at an extreme peak then ah.”

“It was very likely the strongest Sacred Ground lineup ever since the time of the Great Calamity, still unmatched up till now.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “At least speaking from the historical records on hand, Ancestor Heaven Diviner did not intentionally conceal himself deeply. It was instead that his personality was indeed rather mild, as he was more willing to focus on researching the martial dao as well as the culture of before the Great Calamity.”

“Our clan’s records on before and after the Great Calamity were mostly sorted out by him.”

“If not for the Exalted Heaven Shaker perishing, our clan having taken a great blow to its vitality, perhaps no one would ever have known of the extraordinariness of the Heaven Diviner.”

Hearing his words, Feng Yunsheng nodded, “What’s sad is that the two of them both died young with regard to the longevities that they should have had. Otherwise, who knows what heights they could have attained?”

Perhaps not as openly obsessed with it as Sikong Qing, but Feng Yunsheng was also enamoured with the martial dao.

Actually, Yan Zhaoge was also the same in this regard.

“The past is over, look to the now,” Yan Zhaoge pointed towards the north, where nothing lay on the horizon, just that there was the direction in which the Wind Domain’s Sacred Ground, Black Nightmare Mountain, had originally been located, “Black Nightmare Mountain was destroyed by the Exalted Heaven Shaker, only its remains visible today. However, they has already been weathered very terribly.”

Feng Yunsheng glanced at Ah Hu, smiling, “I heard that Big Brother Huang cultivates in the supreme martial arts of Black Nightmare Mountain.”

Ah Hu grinned, “Family Head once obtained a rather complete portion of Black Nightmare Mountain’s legacies, passing them down to me.”

Yan Zhaoge seemed to have thought of something, “Oh, right. While Black Nightmare Mountain was destroyed all those years ago, some of its past members still remain concealed about, some even having escaped into the Great Western Desert.”

“While all these years, the descendants of Black Nightmare Mountain have been decreasing steadily, some still exist. Currently, travelling in the Wind Domain, as compared to the

people of the Sacred Sun Clan, we should be more wary of them as well as those of the Decimating Abyss Organisation.”

Feng Yunsheng nodded, “I understand.”

They continued on without rest, passing through the West Heaven Region and onto the territory of the Sand Region.

Broad Creed Mountain had had a higher echelon expert take up office as the Sand Region’s First Seat Elder there.

Under this First Seat Elder were similarly Principal Elders as well as Acting Elders, in charge of the affairs in their various lands.

Along the way, Yan Zhaoge often had to exchange greetings with those in charge of the lands.

Although just over a year had passed, the current Yan Zhaoge was already completely different in status from before he had gone to the Eastern Tang.

Not speaking of the fact that his late Xiantian Martial Scholar cultivation base was already higher than most Acting Elders, even Principal Elders of the Martial Grandmaster realm already no longer treated him like a senior would a member of the younger generation.

Strictly speaking, the War of the Eastern Tang was still fine. It was following his journey to Cloud Portent Mountain that his

position in the clan had truly become incomparable to how it had been in the past.

Having remained in Cloud Portent Mountain for a time, then headed to the East Strangling Snow Mountains, afterwards heading to Clear Concealed Lake before remaining in cultivation back at Broad Creed Mountain after having returned to the Heaven Domain, it was only now that he had finally come to travel in outer ring territory that was controlled by Broad Creed Mountain once more.

And the attitudes of these Elders of the clan, dispatched far from Broad Creed Mountain, had experienced a complete reversal.

Those who were affiliated to his father's faction and those whose remained neutral aside, even those who were affiliated to his second apprentice uncle's Fang Zhun's factions, whatever their innermost thoughts, at least had to put up a passable show on the surface.

Those on the level of Acting Elders could even be described as reverential in their respect.

Because this youth before them was no already longer the person of the past whom they might be able to use to attack Yan Di, a younger generation disciple in whom they could search for faults.

The current Yan Zhaoge already had begun to grasp a position within the clan, which was clearly becoming more and more substantive!

HSSB 216: The Changes In Yan Zhaoge's Status

To the martial practitioners of Broad Creed Mountain in the Wind Domain, they had experienced the changes in Yan Zhaoge's status as well as his effectiveness first hand...

When the Sacred Sun Clan had counterattacked previously, fighting with Broad Creed Mountain over the Gan Region, it was precisely the news over from the Mountain Domain that Infinite Boundless Mountain had joined sides with Broad Creed Mountain and Jade Sea City that had forced the Sacred Sun Clan, originally wanting to regain their lost territory, to have to retreat to the Qin Region.

Of Broad Creed Mountain, from the old Chief Yuan Zhengfeng to the many Elders below him, all of them had been full of praise for Yan Zhaoge then, because his trip to Cloud Portent Mountain had really been too significant.

Infinite Boundless Mountain had directly fallen out with the Sacred Sun Clan and the Heavenly Thunder Hall for good, of which long-standing effects could be seen in many areas.

From a certain angle, Yan Zhaoge's Thunder Element Revival Art at Cloud Portent Mountain, from tens of thousands of kilometres away, had greatly aided his clan's war efforts in the Wind Domain.

Greatly changing the global situation with his own power-that was not as simple as it sounded.

Some changes in the global situation could already lead to heaven-flipping, earth-overturning changes in the regional situation here.

Moreover, it was such a massive change, directly forcing the Sacred Sun Clan with a Huang Guanglie still yet to emerge from seclusion to, whilst possessing two Sacred Artifacts, only be able to stay on the defensive.

With the situation changing, people's viewpoints also changed, as their stances and decisions were subtly influenced.

At the same time that Yan Zhaoge had the fortune of his father, Yan Di, he himself had displayed abilities more and more outstanding, to the point that his fame had even overshadowed Yan Di's.

In the War of the Eastern Tang, Yan Di, surpassing levels to domineeringly defeat the Grand Elder of the Sacred Sun Clan, the Transcending Mortality Martial Grandmaster Pan Botai, had let the name of Yan Wudi resound in the Martial Grandmaster realm once more.

Currently, in the competition for Broad Creed Mountain's next Chief, the original balance of power had gradually faded away.

Yan Di was beginning to come up from behind to surpass his senior apprentice-brother, Fang Zhun.

Especially after the incident at Clear Concealed Lake, where Fang Zhun had been in charge of leading the team, yet had seen a really close shave. If not for Yan Zhaoge's mighty blow, if the Great Nine Underworlds Door had truly opened, the results would have been unimaginably catastrophic.

Fang Zhun himself had not done anything wrong, but as Yan Zhaoge was the son of Yan Di, some awkwardness had surfaced.

The direct result of this change in the balance of power had caused the hearts of some mid-tier figures of Broad Creed Mountain whose stances had not been firm and had not been fully tied with Fang Zhun's group to waver.

Even if they didn't change their faction, their behaviour also gradually warmed. Leaving some face today, better to meet tomorrow.

This caused them to be more polite when facing Yan Zhaoge.

While it wasn't so openly obvious, Yan Zhaoge could also intuitively feel this.

Yan Zhaoge's attitude was not very different from before, entertaining those who needed to be entertained, visiting those who needed to be visited.

Still, the target of his journey this time was the remains in the

Great Western Desert, and he wouldn't stop for too long along the way. The Black Nightmare Storms of the Great Western Desert were mostly fierce, the time when they were weak limited. If he missed the timing, he would have to wait for next year.

Although he had made some calculations, whether he could successfully bring that stone pillar out of the desert and how much time he would require to do so was still an unknown thing now.

Yan Zhaoge had the habit of giving himself ample time.

Where the Sand Region was bordered to the Great Western Desert, the power who occupied that piece of territory was a first-rate power, the Howling Wind Sword Sect. Broad Creed Mountain's Principal Elder sitting over this area was the First Seat of the Howling Wind Sword Sect.

The piece of territory that he ruled closest to the Great Western Desert, similarly containing Broad Creed Mountain's industries, was the city of Suzhou.

Suzhou City was the final stop in the Sand Region before heading out to the Great Western Desert, and could also be considered the westernmost piece of territory that was under Broad Creed Mountain's control.

There was a great market here, where transactions were carried out with those entering and leaving the Great Western Desert.

Like the Earth Domain, while the Great Western Desert was filled with perils, many strange and rare treasures unique to the area could be found there, attracting the martial practitioners of the Eight Extremities World over, therefore leading to the flourishing markets of Suzhou here.

Broad Creed Mountain's Acting Elder in Suzhou City was surnamed Li. He was an early Xiantian Martial Scholar.

Elder Li received their group warmly. However, on their first meeting, seeing Pan-Pan on whom Yan Zhaoge was seated, Elder Li was left slightly dazed.

The corners of Yan Zhaoge's mouth twitched slightly, "I did say, using a panda as a steed might be..."

However, it seemed that he had overthought things, as Elder Li was full of praise after he had recovered, "This is the Pixiu of legend? Magnificent indeed, extraordinary indeed!"

Hearing those words, Yan Zhaoge forcibly resisted the urge to roll his eyes as he jumped down from Pan-Pan, greeting Elder Li, "I have troubled you this time."

Elder Li laughed, "No trouble, no trouble. You are actually also coming for official matters of the clan. Those things you wanted have already been properly prepared."

After checking them over, Ah Hu nodded to Yan Zhaoge, "Young

Master, they're all here, and in double portions too."

Yan Zhaoge said, "Thank you for your trouble, Elder Li."

Elder Li said, "The environment of the Great Western Desert being special, for convenience's sake, this old man will enter along with you, taking up the role of guide."

Yan Zhaoge thanked him once more. Since everything had been properly prepared, they no longer lingered, leaving Suzhou City together.

In the distance, the desolate desert appeared before their eyes, with an additional feeling of brutality from the deserts they had traversed earlier.

Gazing into the distance, the Great Western Desert actually seemed like a vast plain of black.

Between the heavens and the earth, terrifying black hurricanes were everywhere, rising up to the heavens and entering deeply beneath the ground as they rampaged ceaselessly.

This was still the season at which the Black Nightmare Storms were the weakest; if they were at their fiercest, who knew what it would be like.

Other than Elder Li himself, some martial practitioners under him travelled alongside them. As they progressed, other than the

terrible environment, there was nothing else that Yan Zhaoge had to worry about.

However, mid-journey, a faint light suddenly flashed by before them.

Elder Li identified it for a moment before swivelling his head to look at Yan Zhaoge, “It is a protective treasure commonly used by the Howling Wind Sword Sect. There should be someone trapped here.”

Yan Zhaoge looked at their surroundings, black storms all around, causing a large amount of sand and dust to surge, obscuring the sky and concealing the sun.

Against the biting black wind that resembled daggers of steel, if preparations had not been specifically made, even the aura-qi of peak Martial Scholars would not be able to withstand them.

“Protective treasures can only last for a time. If they are depleted before the people of the Howling Wind Sword Sect arrive, they would be in grave danger then,” Yan Zhaoge said, “The Howling Wind Sword Sect has always been close to our clan, its Elder Jun being a longtime friend of my father. Their people having met danger, we should help them if we can.”

They neared, helping the few youths to avoid the storm.

When the leading girl saw Yan Zhaoge, her eyes instantly lit up,

“Brother Yan!”

Seeing her, Yan Zhaoge matched her features with his memory, “Luo Luo ah, how come you were so careless?”

The person was someone he was acquainted with, precisely the daughter of that Elder Jun of the Howling Wind Sword Sect, a familial acquaintance of Yan Zhaoge’s.

Jun Luo chuckled, before saying to the two youths beside her, “Haven’t you always been curious what kind of figure Brother Yan is? Well, here he is now, in the flesh!”

The two youths were a little stunned, feeling as though they were in a dream. It was a while before they managed to regain their wits, hurriedly bowing to Yan Zhaoge in thanks.

“Son of Sand Region’s Lian Family Lian Ying, thanks Broad Creed Young Master for saving my life.”

“Son of Sand Region’s Lian Family Lian Cheng, thanks Broad Creed Young Master for saving my life.”

HSSB 217: Assassination!

Looking over, Yan Zhaoge saw the two youths bow to him in unison.

Yan Zhaoge had heard the name of the Sand Region's Lian Family when coming to the Wind Domain. It was a second-rate power in the Sand Region subordinate to the Howling Wind Sword Sect.

Within the territory controlled by the Lian Family was a Jade Sand Spring, which had a bit of fame, its value unordinary. Every year, Broad Creed Mountain's Acting Elder stationed there would receive a portion of the spring water.

However, Yan Zhaoge's knowledge of the Lian Family was more or less limited to this.

Yan Zhaoge turned to look at Jun Luo, who said, "I have known Lian Ying and Lian Cheng since young. This time, I met them by coincidence. They were being attacked, and I lent them a helping hand.

"After sending the enemy into retreat, we were instead trapped by a storm. Luckily, Brother Yan and the others passed by."

Yan Zhaoge smiled, saying, "You were the damsel saving the hero this time."

Jun Luo wrinkled her nose slightly, also smiling, "That's true."

Yan Zhaoge shook his head, laughing. Looking at the two Lians again, they were rather weak-looking youths.

But if one really were to speak of it, while they were still only Martial Artists, their cultivation bases limited, they still far surpassed ordinary strong men who didn't cultivate.

But from their appearances, the both of them gave off a rather soft, feminine feeling.

Yan Zhaoge had seen quite a few males who were rather more soft and feminine before. However, two brothers from the same family both being like that was quite a rare thing. After all, the martial legacies of the Sand Region's Lian Family, from the rumours, walked a rather tough, fierce path.

Yan Zhaoge raised his head to look at the sky, "Luo Luo, in coming to the Great Western Desert this time, it is because I have a matter to take care of. Bringing you alone would not only be inconvenient, it would instead be even more dangerous for you, because I will be entering the depths of the Great Western Desert.

Hearing his words, Jun Luo nodded sensibly, "I understand."

Of the two beside her, Lian Cheng looked rather troubled, yet did not dare to speak, while Lian Ying revealed a conflicted, gloomy expression.

Heading along with Yan Zhaoge into the depths of the Great Western Desert was something that they didn't even dare to think about; they would be happy to avoid it.

However, if Yan Zhaoge wanted to abandon them, they would be unable to return to the Sand Region.

Jun Luo, however, was not worried, believing that Yan Zhaoge would definitely have arrangements.

Yan Zhaoge surveyed the surroundings, asking Elder Li, "Where was the originally decided supply point?"

Moving about in the desert, especially in an environment like the Great Western Desert, most would set up supply points.

Elder Li understood Yan Zhaoge's meaning, as he calculated for a moment before answering, "Best head forward a little more."

Yan Zhaoge nodded, "You are most familiar with the situation here; best you make the arrangements."

Then, he said to the trio, "I will bring you along for a little more. After the supply point has been set up, we will leave you there, with some martial practitioners of our clan to guard you. You can just wait there; upon my return, I will bring you out of the desert together."

"If I want to stay for a longer period of time, I will arrange for

others to send you back.”

They immediately let out sighs of relief, Jun Luo smiling, “This time, we will really be troubling Brother Yan and seniors of Broad Creed Mountain.”

They moved out. As Jun Luo’s mind relaxed, her attention was instantly drawn by Pan-Pan.

Although Pan-Pan had currently completely released his size, being even larger than an elephant, when not facing enemies, he always had on that pure and foolish look, which drew her to him.

Seeing Jun Luo completely lunge onto Pan-Pan’s body, her body sinking deeply into his thick fur, stroking him repeatedly, Yan Zhaoge couldn’t help but smile, “Your cultivation base is still low—why did you come into a place like the Great Western Desert?”

Jun Luo laughed somewhat awkwardly, her eyes shooting about.

Yan Zhaoge rolled his eyes, “Looking to the lands where heroes abound, countless passions ablaze? Thinking that there is nowhere in these vast heavens and earth that you cannot visit? Wanting to properly see the unique, extraordinary scenes long renowned in this world?”

Jun Luo chuckled, “Mainly because I heard you, Brother Yan, tell me many such stories in the past...”

Yan Zhaoge was somewhat amused by this slightly tomboyish girl, “Ah, so it’s my fault then?”

Jun Luo hurriedly waved her hands, laughing, “I don’t dare, I don’t dare. When we return, I still need Brother Yan to put in some good words for me...”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “In coming this time, I passed by the Howling Wind Sword Sect. I wanted to meet Uncle Jun, but he was out adventuring. If you can rush back to your sect before he returns...”

Jun Luo’s eyes lit up, “Definitely, definitely, Brother Yan, remember to hide it for me a little then...”

Her words not having finished, Yan Zhaoge continued, “... afterwards, I would still mention it to Uncle Jun.”

Jun Luo was instantly stunned, her body deflating greatly.

Feng Yunsheng and Ah Hu watched on rather interestedly at this. Meanwhile, as Lian Cheng and Lian Ying watched Jun Luo behave like a child in front of Yan Zhaoge, envy that could not be concealed appeared in both their eyes.

Afterwards, they set up a supply point. With some specially made spirit talismans and supporting treasures, they set up a formation that could hold out for a set period of time, keeping the wind and sand of the outside world at bay.

A few experienced Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners stayed behind on Elder Li's orders, remaining there with Jun Luo and the two Lians.

Yan Zhaoge and the others continued on their journey.

A path to their destination had already been opened up by Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners before this. It was just that with the fierceness of the previous Black Nightmare Storms, the path had gradually been buried and concealed. However, with marks of it left behind, it was much easier for their group.

After a long, difficult trek, that damaged stone pillar erect in the desert finally appeared before everyone's eyes.

Yan Zhaoge stared at the patterns on the stone pillar, not speaking for a long time.

Elder Li waved his hands, dispersing along with his subordinates, setting up a barrier formation once more, keeping away the wind and the sand.

While they had arrived at their destination, Yan Zhaoge's work here could not be completed within a short period of time.

At the same time, even an Acting Elder like Elder Li did not possess the authority to get up close with these precious remains, let alone the martial practitioners below him.

Elder Li was extremely by the book, performing his duties well. Other than having acted as a guide for Yan Zhaoge, having arrived here, he helped him to set up watch over the surrounding area.

“Old Li, I really had not thought that Young Master Yan is actually so knowledgeable about ancient remains,” Following by Elder Li’s side, a middle-aged martial practitioner followed him behind another sand dune, praising, “Even less so that he actually can have authority at the level of a First Seat Elder.”

Elder Li said, “Don’t look down on him; he is someone with true abilities. Able to get to where he is today, it was not completely through Elder Yan’s backing...”

As he was speaking, Elder Li suddenly felt a stabbing pain in his back!

“I know ah...otherwise, we would also not have to be so roundabout,” The middle-aged martial practitioner beside him said as he smiled.

Elder Li could only feel his life force rapidly fading away, opening his mouth but unable to let out a sound.

He spun his head in shock to look at this middle-aged man who should originally have been one of his most trusted subordinates, instead seeing a scene that left him stunned.

As the other party smiled, his features and appearance were actually changing slowly, becoming more and more like that of Elder Li!

HSSB 218: Pillar Of The Divine Palace

Elder Li felt his thoughts rigidifying, but looking at that middle-aged man whose appearance was gradually changing, a single thought still abruptly surfaced within his mind, “Imitation Killing Jade!”

The unique treasure Imitation Killing Jade, a one-time use item, extremely rare, not having appeared in this world for many years, usually thought of as extinct.

Within a set period of time after killing a target, the user would be able to imitate the killed target in terms of flesh and blood as well as aura-qi.

The middle-aged man was not of Broad Creed Mountain’s direct lineage, instead being a talent that Elder Li had found from outside, having already followed him for many years, having been very loyal to him, even having saved his life before.

However, today, he bared his fangs, assassinating Elder Li.

What caused Elder Li more shock was that the other party’s words clearly spoke of a greater scheme.

This person having killed him with an Imitation Killing Jade, he would be able to pose as him for a short period of time. Even the circulation of his inner qi, if a fight did not start, was something that the other Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners would be hard pressed to distinguish.

“Yao Shan!” Elder Li wanted to shout loudly, but discovered that he could not even utter the slightest sound.

In terms of cultivation, the person before him far surpassed his past impression of him.

He could only look at the other party transforming little by little, perfectly taking on his appearance.

The Yao Shan who had already taken on Elder Li’s appearance smiled slightly, “Please do not worry. Having followed you for so long, your habits, style of handling things, actions and tone of speaking-I can reproduce them to about ninety percent. The others won’t be able to see through me.”

“As for why I disappeared,” As Yao Shan spoke, he took out a Shadow Shrinking Pouch.

The Shadow Shrinking Pouch opened, a figure leaping out. Elder Li stared as another Yao Shan appeared before him.

Yao Shan smiled, “This is not from an Imitating Killing Jade. It is my companion, having changed his appearance to that of mine. He is also very familiar with my habits, and won’t reveal any flaws.”

“Moreover, as compared to you, I am much less conspicuous. As long as I do not disappear without any reason or intentionally attract attention, no one would pay any attention to me.”

“I killed you very silently; although there were fluctuations of aura-qi, this is still very normal. Repelling beasts in the desert, we often have to make a move.”

Elder Li’s eyes were still staring wide, but life had already left his body.

Yao Shan smiled slightly, “It was nice knowing you; rest in peace.”

Saying thus, he sorted out the things on Elder Li’s body, moving them to his own, before storing Elder Li’s corpse within the Shadow Shrinking Pouch.

Having kept the Shadow Shrinking Pouch, Yao Shan flicked his sleeves, exchanging smiles with his companion who had taken on his appearance.

One at the front, one at the back, continuing to stride on like the real Elder Li and Yao Shan earlier, as though none of these earlier events had transpired.

Before the stone pillar, Yan Zhaoge stood with his hands behind his back, looking earnestly at the patterns on its surface, “I didn’t see wrong; it is indeed a pillar of the past Divine Palace, having fallen here after it broke off.

Seeing the broken, damaged stone pillar, Yan Zhaoge fell into

deep thought, “These marks of damage are not simple. I fear that it wasn’t simply a natural calamity, but...”

Yan Zhaoge raised his head slightly, “If that is true, who exactly was it that caused all of this?”

“Even the powerful Divine Palace was destroyed, the entire world suffering a great tribulation, virtually changing the heavens and switching the earth. Someone who could do all this...”

Although it didn’t really feel real, being so extremely far off from him as he was now, Yan Zhaoge still felt a shadow hanging over his heart, like there was a great mountain weighing down upon it.

Perhaps this pressure was not all that direct, but it was much greater than that from the Sacred Sun Clan and Huang Guanglie.

The global situation of the Eight Extremities could still see balance, could still be fought over, could still see pursuit, could still see resistance, could still see victory.

However, that Armageddon-like power that seemed able to decimate the very heavens and earth-if it were to descend again, how could they tide past it?

Perhaps such a massive tribulation wouldn’t descend in Yan Zhaoge’s lifetime. But, after...

Yan Zhaoge closed his eyes for a long time. When they reopened,

his gaze had already regained its calm.

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step,” Yan Zhaoge muttered, extending his palm, pressing it down on that broken, damaged pillar of the Divine Palace.

As Yan Zhaoge’s aura-qi was infused within the stone pillar, numerous patterns of light lit up on its surface, extending down the path the patterns followed.

However, having reached a crack, the light patterns broke off, beginning to dissipate, turning into specks of light that drifted away in the air.

Still, even so, numerous formless waves emanated outwards from the stone pillar, repelling a large amount of wind and sand.

Looking at where the stone pillar was damaged, Yan Zhaoge involuntarily knit his brows slightly.

After pondering for a moment, he infused his aura-qi within once again, the light patterns on the stone pillar lighting up once more.

As the light patterns reached the area with cracks, their glows suddenly became brighter and more dazzling, and also more condensed and real.

Formless, intangible radiance seemed to turn tangible at this moment, with a slow yet stable speed, no longer relying on the

stone pillar, actually continuing to extend in mid-air.

Just like this, the light patterns that contained infinite profundities seemed to twine around a complete stone pillar within the air, continuing to intertwine and coil.

The light patterns circulated, coiling around the non-existent, formless stone pillar, becoming more and more complete, the spiritual qi spilling out from within becoming more and more majestic, unceasingly shocking the surrounding air.

The profound concept of that stone pillar which had originally been damaged gradually became complete once more, being very hard to fathom, yet shaking one's very soul.

A focused expression on his face, Yan Zhaoge instead shut his eyes.

Within his brain, it gradually reappeared, that existence buried deep within his memories, that towering Divine Palace standing above the nine heavens.

The stone pillar buried within the desert suddenly began to shake.

As the stone pillar shook, with it as the centre, numerous spirit patterns began extending far off into the distance within the desert, spreading their claws with a fierce momentum.

The nearby sand dunes all began heaving intensely as the desert seemed to have turned into an ocean at this very moment, wild winds rampaging, strong tides surging.

Standing by the side, Ah Hu and Feng Yunsheng both looked at this scene with serious expressions on their faces, as they barely managed to keep themselves stable.

Yan Zhaoge's expression was as per usual as after a while, he let out a long breath, ceasing his infusion of aura-qi into the stone pillar.

The shaken desert finally returned to its original state, but on the ground, numerous light patterns that resembled cracks still extended outwards in all directions.

The light patterns on the stone pillar lit up, those patterns of light condensed in mid-air that seemed to cause the broken, damaged stone pillar to regain its original, complete form still present, not yet having dispersed.

Looking at the stone pillar, Yan Zhaoge's mind drifted slightly as he pondered, "Indeed having become one with the geography of the Great Western Desert."

"Under such circumstances, wanting to pull out the stone pillar and take it away, I will probably have to achieve an initial refinement of it on the spot first."

Standing guard by the side, Ah Hu's mind suddenly moved slightly. Swivelling his head over, he saw Elder Li and a few of the martial practitioners under him returning, seemingly having something to report to Yan Zhaoge.

HSSB 219: Natural Disasters And Human-Induced Occurrences

Seeing Elder Li return, Ah Hu asked, “What’s wrong?”

Elder Li’s expression was rather grave, “It seems like there’s going to be a change in the weather. A Black Dragon Dread may erupt here soon.”

Hearing his words, Ah Hu could not help but draw back the corners of his mouth.

Entering the Great Western Desert this time, he had studied up on it along with Yan Zhaoge beforehand, thus having heard of the infamy of Black Dragon Dreads before.

The so-called Black Dragon Dreads were Black Nightmare Storms suddenly increasing in power within a small area, forming terrifying storms that far exceeded how they were usually.

Generally speaking, Black Dragon Dreads left as quickly as they came, but their destructive power was extremely shocking.

Imitating Yan Zhaoge, Ah Hu stroked his lower chin, “The barrier formation that we have now won’t be able to withstand it?”

Elder Li nodded, “It will be hard. Looking at the portents of it

visible in the heavens, this Black Dragon Dread will be extremely fierce, and our current methods would be hard pressed to withstand it.”

Ah Hu smacked his lips, “I will seek instruction from Young Master.”

Hearing Ah Hu’s report, after concentrating in deep thought for a moment, Yan Zhaoge said, “No matter. Get everyone to congregate close to the stone pillar. If a Black Dragon Dread really assaults, I will handle it.”

“I am currently finding a means to achieve an initial refinement of this stone pillar. If we withdraw just like this, let’s not even speak of previous efforts having been wasted, it could even lead to an opposite effect, with the stone pillar being sucked beneath the desert instead, completely being buried within it. At that time, it would be hard if we wanted to get it out again.”

After hearing his words, Ah Hu nodded, “I understand; I will communicate it to them now.”

The big man turned and left, returning before Elder Li whereupon he relayed Yan Zhaoge’s decision of temporarily not leaving.

Elder Li glanced somewhat worriedly at Yan Zhaoge, but then finally still nodded, “Okay then, this old man will go inform the others.”

Those dispersed in the outskirts congregated in the area where the stone pillar was once more. However, by Elder Li's arrangements, they still didn't get close to the pillar and Yan Zhaoge.

Everyone stood with their backs towards the centre, remaining vigilant. However, the stone pillar behind them that flickered with a profound radiance, with strong fluctuations in its aura, still attracted the attention of everyone here.

Although they were not really clear why, just looking at those light patterns on the stone pillar, it felt to them like there were infinite profundities contained within.

And they also felt that the Yan Zhaoge standing by the bottom of the pillar seemed to be gradually becoming one with it.

The real Yao Shan, the 'Elder Li' of now, casually turned back and glanced at Yan Zhaoge and the stone pillar, murmuring within his heart, "Indeed having some abilities; his reputation is not undeserved."

The martial practitioner in Yao Shan's form, standing beside him, sent over a sound transmission with his aura-qi, "Wasn't it that he only came here to survey these remains? What is he thinking of doing now? Could it be that he wants to take away that stone pillar from the desert with his own power?"

"When the elite Martial Grandmasters of Broad Creed Mountain came here before, even they weren't able to pull the stone pillar

out ah.”

‘Elder Li’ pondered as he spoke, “From the looks of it, he indeed has this intention. However, whether or not he can succeed is another matter altogether.”

‘Yao Shan’ laughed lightly, “Even if he really has a way, the Black Dragon Dread will be arriving very soon. There’s not much time left for him.”

‘Elder Li’ momentarily narrowed his eyes into slits, his gaze deep and distant, “Broad Creed Mountain looks rather highly on these remains. While only an Acting Elder like Old Li accompanied Yan Zhaoge in, in the outskirts, there may very possibly be Martial Grandmaster experts on guard, creating a zone of safety.”

“Therefore, our clan’s Martial Grandmaster experts cannot draw near. They can only move from far away, causing a Black Dragon Dread in this region. At that time, it will still fall to us to make a move.”

His companion nodded slightly upon hearing his words, “With the assault of the Black Dragon Dread, the situation will surely be chaotic. At that time, you will hopefully have a chance to make a move.”

‘Elder Li’ said, “For the Black Dragon Dread, other than creating chaos, the most important is still depleting the power of his Sacred Artifact fragment as much as possible. Otherwise, even if we move, it would be hard for us to succeed.”

“Other than that, he also has a retainer who never leaves his side, who seems to be a Heavenly Connection Martial Scholar. We must also draw his attention away in order to be free to act.”

He sucked in a deep breath, “I will leave this to you at that time. Do not do push yourself beyond what is possible-being able to draw him away would already be a success.”

‘Yao Shan’ nodded, “Rest easy, I understand.”

A cold light flickered in ‘Elder Li’s’ pupils, “Zhan Dongge, you ended my Black Nightmare’s lineage that year-vengeance shall fall upon your descendants! My clan has still not yet perished-we will fight to the end with your Broad Creed Mountain!”

The two remnants of Black Nightmare Mountain looked at Yan Zhaoge and that stone pillar with respectful expressions on their faces which were actually cold underneath.

Standing by the bottom of the stone pillar, Yan Zhaoge extended his palm once more, pressing on its surface.

On the back of his hand, numerous light patterns shockingly also appeared, cut of the same cloth as the ones on the stone pillar’s exterior.

The light patterns on the stone pillar resembled flowing water as they trickled along the stone pillar and onto the back of Yan

Zhaoge's hand, then extending unceasingly towards his wrist and forearm.

Numerous silhouettes appeared in Yan Zhaoge's mind, countless scenes flashing past.

For a moment, it seemed as though a massive palm descended from the heavens, slamming onto the roof of the Divine Palace!

Seeing this scene, Yan Zhaoge abruptly awakened, returning to reality.

While that massive stone pillar, stuck within the desert, shook once more, like mountains shaking and the earth quaking as ripple-like patterns that resembled flowing water extended unceasingly on the sandy ground towards the surrounding distance.

The vast desert seemed to have become like the surface of a sea once again, tides rising and ebbing.

By the side, Ah Hu, Feng Yunsheng, Pan-Pan, as well as 'Elder Li' and the others all heaved up and down along with the ground beneath them.

Finally, the quaking stopped, the great earth regaining its former calm.

That stone pillar remained standing tall where it was, as though

it had completely merged as one with the great desert.

Within the gazes of 'Elder Li' and 'Yao Shan', well-concealed mocking, delighted looks flashed by.

They gazed towards the distance, "It's coming!"

While the quaking of the earth had stopped, the storm in the sky was getting stronger and stronger.

The sky before them had already completely turned dark, the terrifying black hurricane resembling numerous black dragons rampaging wantonly between the heavens and the earth.

The black hurricane roared in rage, assaulting towards them as it obscured the heavens and covered the earth.

Yan Zhaoge turned his head back and looked silently at that Black Nightmare Storm which was growing stronger nearby at a rapid rate.

Under the assault of the storm, the various defences that they had set up in the surroundings trembled.

The sudden Black Dragon Dread had already surpassed the limit of what the barrier formation could bear.

Often traversing the desert, they had also prepared for Black

Dragon Dreads that might suddenly fall upon them. They immediately used these preparations, stabilising the formation.

However, these could only be sustained for a relatively short period of time. As time passed, the formation finally still began to collapse!

Everyone looked at Yan Zhaoge.

There, the stone pillar still stood tall.

Yan Zhaoge's expression was calm. "Gather over where I am."

They all neared Yan Zhaoge and the stone pillar.

Just behind them, the terrifying storm broke through the formation, strong black gales that filled the entire sky surging madly!

'Elder Li' and 'Yao Shan' drooped their eyelids, concealing the cold light in their eyes, rushing towards Yan Zhaoge amidst everyone else!

HSSB 220: The Helpful Black Nightmare Mountain

They all gathered around Yan Zhaoge and the stone pillar, its surface flickering with a golden radiance.

The illusory light patterns condensed within the air seemed to reconstruct the broken, missing parts of the stone pillar.

Standing by the bottom of the stone pillar, Yan Zhaoge pressed on its surface with one hand. With his other hand, he extended his index finger, tapping lightly on his dantian.

He stared fixedly at the encroaching black storm outside that was breaking through the formation.

‘Elder Li’ and ‘Yao Shan’, meanwhile, had their attentions placed on Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu, as well as Pan-Pan who had already retreated to Yan Zhaoge’s side.

Looking at the storm which was sweeping over towards them, Yan Zhaoge’s gaze flickered unceasingly as he swiftly calculated within his heart.

Within his dantian, the clear qi spread to the sides, and the chaotic qi mass began surging unceasingly.

The aura-qi suddenly flowed with a wondrous, unique rhythm; it

was faint yet also vigorous.

Others were unable to detect its existence. But even if they could do so, they would be unable to understand it, unable to identify it.

The aura-qi infused through Yan Zhaoge's palm into the stone pillar became more and more forceful, causing the light patterns on the pillar's surface to become more and more dazzling.

Rushing over to Yan Zhaoge's side, everyone looked nervously at him.

Looking back, the terrifying Black Nightmare Storm seemed to resemble numerous vicious dragons that ascended to the heavens and descended into the earth.

Wherever the storm passed, devastation was left in its wake as one gully after another was ripped out of the desert, levelling many sand dunes as a great amount of sand and wind swept violently everywhere.

With Yan Zhaoge's vision, he could even see those tiny sand particles, after having been swept into the storm, shatter a step further to become even smaller than dust!

As the hurricane blew, because of the stone pillar's connection to the desert, the sand in which it was buried remained stable as Mount Tai.

However, those standing on the desert's surface would be hard pressed to escape; they were most likely going to be ripped apart by the rampant hurricane!

As the storm was already right before their eyes, and Yan Zhaoge still hadn't done anything, everyone began to feel a little uneasy.

While a commotion did not arise, within their gazes were all ill-concealed looks of anxiety.

Earlier, it was because of Yan Zhaoge's decision that they had not retreated to avoid the Black Dragon Dread.

Now, the Black Dragon Dread having arrived, if Yan Zhaoge really had no way of dealing with it, all of them would have to die here along with him.

Of course, they did not think that Yan Zhaoge might intentionally be putting them in this situation, because Yan Zhaoge himself was facing the same danger.

However, seeing the storm descend upon them now, without any reactive measures having been taken, they were all greatly disappointed.

'Elder Li' and 'Yao Shan' exchanged gazes, "He doesn't intend to activate the power of that Sacred Artifact fragment? Is it that he isn't willing to or that he can't do it in the first place? Without a Sacred Artifact fragment, where does his confidence in not

retreating stem from?”

“If that Sacred Artifact fragment of his truly cannot be drawn upon, we wouldn’t even have needed to induce a Black Dragon Dread! Now, it having descended, even we ourselves have been drawn in!”

‘Elder Li’s’ gaze was sombre, “While I am a little unresigned, if it really is like this, that’s just fate. Bringing down along with us the first person of Broad Creed Mountain’s younger generation, a monstrous genius barely past twenty who can influence the overall situation of this world with a cultivation of the Martial Scholar realm-it would not be a loss for us!”

He gave a cold snort, “Raise your vigilance; perhaps he has a cold-blooded, selfish personality, and having a method to protect himself, he intends to let us perish, while he escapes unscathed”.

“If it is really like that, we must grasp that final chance, sending him on his way!”

Within a mere few short breaths of time, the terrifying storm had already arrived before them!

Those standing the furthest away from their centre, their footing unstable, were actually unable to stay rooted on the ground as they seemed about to be directly swept into the air!

Seeing this, everyone’s faces changed!

The shadow of death hung over everyone, as danger was already about to descend!

At this time, Yan Zhaoge's hands pressed onto the pillar together!

The stone pillar on which light patterns flickered shook intensely, streaks of light shooting outwards in all directions!

Their radiance resembled numerous chains, shooting out like lightning into the rampaging storm.

For just that one moment, time itself seemed to freeze.

The terrifying black storm seemed to pause in mid-air, resembling the still image of a painting as bright radiance extended rapidly within the black winds, intermingling with the storm.

The next moment, time, seemingly having been paused for an instant, resumed once more, the fierce storm still lunging towards them.

However, at this moment, numerous thick spirit patterns reappeared on the sandy ground beneath everyone's feet, enveloping the nearby area of desert.

Numerous streaks of spiritual light shot up into the air, enveloping all of them, holding off the storm once more.

Shocked, they watched the numerous radiances emanated from the stone pillar, still clashing with the tempest, dancing wildly in mid-air along with the strong, severe winds.

Yan Zhaoge exhaled and roared, “Condense!”

On the stone pillar radiating light, spiritual light flashed where the broken, missing parts were, with light actually extending unceasingly to fill up the areas in which the light patterns were missing.

It was as though the broken stone pillar had grown out once more, about to regain its original form!

On seeing this scene, everyone, ‘Elder Li’ and ‘Yao Shan’ included, was left staring and gaping in amazement, “Could it be that he can really pull this stone pillar out from the Great Western Desert?! Even elite Martial Grandmasters couldn’t do it ah!”

As the broken stone pillar stopped growing, illuminated by radiance, regaining its original appearance and contours perfectly, Yan Zhaoge let out a low roar once more.

“Up!”

Accompanied by Yan Zhaoge’s low roar, the numerous radiances that extended from the stone pillar abruptly grew taut!

The black storm that had originally brought them the threat of death now resembled thousands of divinities grabbing these radiant chains in unison, before pulling on them mightily!

The desert beneath the stone pillar shook intensely as it never had before!

At this moment, the very heavens and earth in the surrounding area seemed to be shaking along with it.

Then, under their shell-shocked gazes, that stone pillar which seemed to have completely merged with the desert, flickering with infinite radiance, lifted up from the ground!

The massive stone pillar emerged little by little from the desert, breaking free from the imprisonment of the sand below!

The ground beneath their feet surged unceasingly, the radiance protecting them also weakening non-stop.

However, that rampaging storm overhead was currently not of the leisure to cause any harm to them, instead being completely focused on being a pulley for the stone pillar.

Although they were not clear on the specifics of this, not knowing how in the world Yan Zhaoge had managed to achieve it, they all gradually realised, “He made use of the power of the natural disaster from the Great Western Desert itself, instead using it to help the stone pillar to break free of its imprisonment and

merger with the desert...”

Everyone could not hold back on their praises within their hearts, “At the Martial Scholar realm, actually able to instead make use of the power of natural phenomena. This is just too incomprehensible, too terrifying! How exactly did he achieve this?”

Upon regaining their wits, ‘Elder Li’ and ‘Yao Shan’ stared at each other, “That was...instead making use of the Black Dragon Dread that we created?”

If not for the Black Dragon Dread that had sprung up, giving an abrupt boost to the storm in the surrounding area, if Yan Zhaoge had wanted to directly lift the stone pillar up with the Black Nightmare Storms in this area, it would definitely not have been so easy for him.

Realising that their side had instead helped Yan Zhaoge out, the faces of the two turned somewhat green, as though they had swallowed a dead rat whole.

HSSB 221: Left Hand Leading A Panda, Right Hand...

The radiances entangling the stone pillar in the form of numerous bands of light surged in the air, drawn taut by the Black Nightmare Storm.

The tension forcibly pulled the stone pillar out from within the desert.

In that moment in which the stone pillar was completely removed from the ground, a majestic force suddenly emanated outwards in all directions.

Swept by these wild waves, the Black Nightmare Storm around them, was completely eradicated!

The sand within the air was completely crushed into dust, dispersing along within the wind into the distance.

If one were to look down from above the nine heavens, they would see that within the desert enveloped and obscured by Black Nightmare Storms, a clear patch of land had suddenly appeared.

Where the stone pillar had stood originally, the vast desert had virtually been levelled into flat land, forming a massive depression in the ground.

That stone pillar hovered in mid-air, the numerous radiances extending outwards from it already having been retracted, only leaving the pillar itself, enveloped by light.

As the golden radiance on the surface of the stone pillar gradually dissipated, the crowd saw that the broken and damaged parts on it had shockingly been repaired.

The stone pillar was complete, as if it had been reborn.

Looking at the massive stone pillar before them, then turning their somewhat stiff necks to look at the surrounding sky which had suddenly cleared up, they finally regained their wits, letting out simultaneous whoops of joy.

The movements of 'Elder Li' and 'Yao Shan' were half a beat slower, but they immediately put on joyful expressions along with everyone else.

It was only that as the two exchanged looks, their gazes were both filled with despondence.

The real Yao Shan sucked in a deep breath and calmed his emotions before sending a sound transmission via aura-qi to his companion, "Do not move rashly; now, there is no way to ascertain whether he can use that Sacred Artifact fragment of his."

The fake Yao Shan replied, "I understand."

Although he said this, within his tone could still be detected some grinding of teeth.

The stone pillar slowly descended. Seeing this, Ah Hu hurriedly prepared to receive it.

Yan Zhaoge was just saying, "I'll do it," when he saw that Ah Hu's hands had already reached out.

Who knew that as soon as his palms touched the bottom of the stone pillar, his expression would change greatly as he felt a boundless force pressuring down on it, his wrists nearly being dislocated!

Only looking at that stone pillar's exterior, while it was massive in size, Ah Hu was already at the peak of the Heavenly Connection Martial Scholar realm. His wrists exerting force and his aura-qi erupting in full, how could his strength be just at hundreds of thousands of kilograms.

However, supporting that stone pillar now, he felt that he was completely unable to bear its weight as he could only hurriedly remove his hands.

Standing by the side, Yan Zhaoge reached out, also moving to support the bottom of the stone pillar.

A scene which nearly caused Ah Hu's eyeballs to nearly pop out of their sockets now transpired. The stone pillar which he was

unable to support even erupting with all the strength in his body, was actually easily supported by Yan Zhaoge with just one hand.

And by the looks of it, it evidently appeared extremely light in his hands.

Seeing this, everyone else also jumped in shock.

Because of his position and usual behaviour, Ah Hu would easily be overlooked, whether intentionally or not.

However, accompanied by Yan Zhaoge being looked upon more and more highly in the outside world, everything about him would also fall into the eyes of others. Therefore, the outside world's understanding of Ah Hu had also been increasing steadily.

This big man who often followed by Yan Zhaoge's side with the status of a servant or retainer was a peak expert of the Martial Scholar realm.

Many people even wondered in private about between him and Yan Zhaoge, one servant, one master, who exactly was the stronger.

Just now, when Ah Hu had supported the stone pillar, his entire body's aura-qi erupting, that powerful force had caused everyone to be shocked.

Ah Hu usually didn't show the spiritual light above his head, but

when he had exerted force earlier, the spiritual light above his head that connected straight to the heavens had actually been a completely tangible radiance, showing him to have a cultivation of the Heavenly Connection stage.

However, while a Heavenly Connection Martial Scholar like him had been unable to support the stone pillar with even his full strength, Yan Zhaoge had been able to do it easily with but a single hand. This truly left everyone stunned.

Looking at the deeply shocked Ah Hu, the corners of Yan Zhaoge's mouth twitched slightly.

“This stone pillar is special, the concept within extremely profound. Not only you, even many Martial Grandmasters would be unable to lift it up.”

“The reason I can do this is because I have achieved an initial refinement of this stone pillar, merging my fist-intent within. Therefore, while it is as heavy as a mountain to you, to me, it is even lighter than a blade of grass.”

Everyone came to a sudden realisation at his words, Ah Hu rubbing the back of his head as he grinned, “Young Master ah, being able to refine this stone pillar is proof enough of your abilities ah.”

Hearing his words, everyone nodded.

If it were any other situation, Yan Zhaoge would be very happy being simultaneously looked upon by all these gazes of worship and admiration.

However, while his outward expression had not changed, his current emotions were actually very complicated as he didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

Looking at the raised stone pillar on his palm, Yan Zhaoge forcibly resisted the urge to roll his eyes.

Carrying such a giant fella around would truly make for a majestic sight, filled with much visual offensive power, extremely shocking to the eye.

...However, if he were to have to lift this stone pillar all the way from the Wind Domain back to Broad Creed Mountain back at the Heaven Domain, he probably wouldn't feel so happy anymore.

Especially when he didn't have a way to pass it over to others.

Because a special thing about this pillar was that whether it was drawn by a carriage, drawn by a beast, or carried by many people, it would also be hard to successfully transport.

But Yan Zhaoge currently didn't have the ability to let it shrink in size.

In other words, if no changes occurred in the situation, Yan

Zhaoge would have to personally lift this giant fella all the way back to Broad Creed Mountain.

And if he would have to walk all the way back. If he were to ride, let alone other spirit beasts, even Pan-Pan would be crushed by its weight.

Think about it, a domineering steed like Pan-Pan following beside him was already very attention-drawing. Now, if he were to add in one upraised thick stone pillar greater than twenty metres in height, that scene, would really be too beautiful, such that he could not bear to imagine it...

Actually, carrying along such a giant fella, while feeling a little dumb, would still be pretty cool.

The corners of Yan Zhaoge's mouth twitched. While he rather liked to show off, being flashy to the extreme, the precondition was that he himself wanted it, and had a choice in doing so.

Showing off when he wanted to show off, keeping low-key when he wanted to stay low-key-that was life.

If he were forced to be in the limelight, to go out to be surrounded by onlookers, that would really make for a rather uncomfortable feeling.

"This thingy..." Yan Zhaoge thought rather nastily, "...would be rather good for smashing people with."

While languishing in dark thoughts in the midst of his bitterness, Yan Zhaoge sighed within his heart, though he did not outwardly reveal any of this.

One hand lifting the stone pillar, the other meanwhile stroking the patterns on its surface, putting on a look of analysing it in earnest...

As Yan Zhaoge handled the stone pillar, he said to Ah Hu and the others, “Our goal has been achieved. The Black Nightmare Storm will rise again very soon-we should leave.”

In the distance, the dispersed storm was already surging back in this direction.

Everyone hurriedly followed behind Yan Zhaoge, going back the way they had come.

‘Elder Li’ and ‘Yao Shan’ felt defeated to the extreme, but they still put on forced smiles as they followed Yan Zhaoge.

A storm having risen once more, their return journey also became tougher. After trekking a long distance, they finally arrived back at the supply point they had set up earlier.

A few Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners and Jun Luo’s trio were awaiting them there.

HSSB 222: A Storm Arising Once More

Seeing Yan Zhaoge appear before them with that massive stone pillar on his palm, Jun Luo and the others were all stunned, not recovering for a long time.

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, the usually talkative Jun Luo actually seemed to stutter a little at this moment, “Bro...Brother Yan, what...what is this ah?”

Yan Zhaoge said with a nonchalant expression on his face, “Entering the Great Western Desert this time, it was because I had an assignment to carry out, the surveying of some historical remains.”

“As for this....it’s part of those remains. Because it is rather valuable, I had to think of a way to bring it back to the clan.”

Looking at that massive object supported on Yan Zhaoge’s palm, Jun Luo could not help but gulp down a mouthful of saliva, “If you want to take it back to Broad Creed Mountain, if it is like this all the way, wouldn’t it be a little too...eh, a little too spectacular...”

Yan Zhaoge raised his brows slightly, saying to her in a patient, preaching manner, “Luo Luo, haven’t you always wished to live a colourful, exciting life where you just do as you like? This is it ah; a flashy life does not have to be explained.”

Jun Luo’s little face frowned till it scrunched up as she murmured softly, “I just feel that this is not quite right ah...”

Yan Zhaoge just smiled, not answering.

The others were also full of sighs within their hearts. These few they had just met up with were just the beginning. They could foresee that from this day on, they would be facing similar such questions for a long, long time.

What caused Yan Zhaoge a bit of a headache was that this wasn't his original intention.

While he had achieved an initial refinement of the stone pillar, at present, it was still restricted to lifting it up from the great desert.

Yan Zhaoge knew clearly of the origins of this stone pillar. It was a broken pillar of the past Divine Palace, that had descended into this world.

However, whether or not other changes had occurred to it after it had been broken, and what kind of changes they were, was still something that Yan Zhaoge would have to research carefully into.

The result was that Yan Zhaoge was currently still unable to freely control this massive stone pillar, and was only able to leave it at its current massive size.

The shining radiance that had repelled the Black Dragon Dread earlier had disappeared in a flash, no longer appearing.

Even the light patterns on the stone pillar's exterior had gradually dimmed, no longer shining.

Other than the strange changes in weight which deviated from the ordinary, everything seemed completely normal, making it hard for people to believe that it had been this stone pillar which had shaken the surrounding world earlier.

Yan Zhaoge had once fantasised about purely smashing to death his would-be opponents, who had come to make things difficult for him. Still, at present, unless the enemy was directly below his palm, such a thing could only exist in his imagination.

Raising the stone pillar and sweeping it horizontally was temporarily also out of the question. Yan Zhaoge had already experimented with this, and at present, the stone pillar could only remain in a vertical position.

As soon as the stone pillar leaned to the side, Yan Zhaoge would immediately feel intense vibrations on his palm as the stone pillar abruptly became much heavier.

Every time that happened, he would experience what Ah Hu had felt earlier, the feeling of the stone pillar seemingly possessing infinite weight, his wrist instantly feeling like it was going to be dislocated or even break as he held onto it.

However, as time passed, Yan Zhaoge could vaguely feel his connection with that stone pillar getting stronger and stronger.

As the images and scenes that flashed before his eyes got clearer and clearer, the pillar also got lighter and lighter. Even when tilted to the side, while its weight would still increase rapidly, Yan Zhaoge had gradually began to grasp it, as it became easier and easier to control as he wished.

The only problem was that the stone pillar could not shrink, to the point that Yan Zhaoge had to lift such a giant fella up all around wherever he went, being high profile to the extreme.

It was fine in deep mountains and old forests, where there was at least some concealment. In the desert, while there were sand dunes that rose up everywhere, making it more than a vast stretch of nothing, if he were really to lift this stone pillar that was more than twenty metres high along his entire journey, it would still be eye-catching to the extreme.

“The Wind Domain and the Great Western Desert is not all that peaceful ah,” Yan Zhaoge stroked his lower chin, “It’s totally like I have ‘Come beat me up’ written on my face...”

Seeing Yan Zhaoge and Jun Luo conversing happily, their tones casual, envy surfaced on the faces of the two Lians.

It was fine for the younger Lian Cheng who looked to be full of illnesses, whose gaze was filled with envy and yearning.

On the other side, the other, Lian Ying, had some gloominess and restlessness within his gaze.

Like Lian Cheng, the gaze with which Lian Ying looked at Jun Luo was filled with a deep infatuation. However, his gaze was also filled with extremity and fanaticism.

As his gaze fell on Yan Zhaoge, he unconsciously drooped his eyelids, not wanting Yan Zhaoge to detect the light flickering within his eyes.

After having finished packing up their things at the supply point, they set off once more, traversing through the Black Nightmare Storms that were rampaging outside, painstakingly making their way out of the Great Western Desert.

After reaching the supply point, ‘Elder Li’s’ mood instantly improved, “The chess piece that I casually set up earlier will soon come to fruition.”

‘Yao Shan’ beside him looked like there were many matters weighing on his heart, still feeling frustrated by their earlier failure.

‘Elder Li’ shook his head slightly, sending over a sound transmission with his aura-qi, “Prepare to move at any time. I have already sent the news over.”

That martial practitioner in the guise of Yao Shan, whilst controlling his expression very well, not revealing any flaws or discrepancies in the least, clearly had an excited light flash by within his eyes.

“There’s still a chance?” The fake Yao Shan immediately pressed.

The real Yao Shan in the guise of Elder Li smiled, “An interesting child, living in his own thoughts, not caring about other things, unable to see the current situation, unable to weigh the importance of matters...”

“Oftentimes, as long as they are used appropriately, with the timing also grasped well, those little things which originally weren’t all that important might become extraordinarily valuable.”

‘Elder Li’ smiled as he stroked his long beard. This habit of the true Elder Li was imitated by him to the point of perfection.

He sent over, “Very quickly, another Black Dragon Dread will descend!”

“Although our people may be completely exposed because of it, as long as we spend most of our time in the Great Western Desert, it would be very hard for Broad Creed Mountain to do anything to us.”

“But if we succeed, our accomplishments would be great. While Yan Zhaoge is only a Martial Scholar, he is far from ordinary. If we can kill him, the blow towards Broad Creed Mountain would even surpass that of losing some Martial Grandmasters.”

At ‘Elder Li’s’ words, ‘Yao Shan’, whilst being excited, was also a

little doubtful, “This person has many methods, could he...”

‘Elder Li’ glanced at him, “Him lifting up that stone pillar can be considered a miraculous feat, but I believe that this must be taking up quite a bit of his energy. Other than that, the wariness of someone whose goal has yet to be attained and is yet to succeed must be different from someone whose goal has been attained and is full of excitement at his success. He is most likely off guard.”

“Although we don’t know if he can use that Sacred Artifact fragment right now, this second Black Dragon Dread will hopefully see some gains.”

As he stood guard, ‘Elder Li’ gazed to the side. There, Lian Ying’s gaze constantly lingered on Jun Luo, some madness gradually appearing on his face.

‘Elder Li’ began smiling faintly.

Just at this time, the howl of the distant storm grew louder, as the terrifying Black Dragon Dread appeared once more!

HSSB 223: Wanting More

The originally rampant Black Nightmare Storm suddenly became more violent at this moment, transforming into a Black Dragon Dread once more, barreling towards Yan Zhaoge and the others.

Where the strong winds passed, everything, the sands of the desert included, was shattered into dust.

Placed within it, if one's cultivation base was too low, without possessing any special protective methods, they would be destined to die without a proper burial ground.

Yan Zhaoge knit his brows slightly, surveying his surroundings.

While Black Dragon Dreads weren't all that rare, the known disasters within the Great Western Desert were filled with unpredictability, and no one would be able to say for certain whether they would definitely encounter any single one.

Therefore, when encountering a Black Dragon Dread where he had pulled out the stone pillar, other than carefully dealing with it appropriately, Yan Zhaoge did not ponder too much on it.

Entering the Great Western Desert that was filled with Black Nightmare Storms, expecting the possible occurrence of a Black Dragon Dread and carefully dealing with such sudden unforeseen circumstances was not any out of the ordinary at all.

But within such a short period of time, they had continuously encountered Black Dragon Dreads, which seemed to be pursuing them non-stop.

This obviously abnormal matter was not something that Yan Zhaoge could ignore.

Gazing at the Black Nightmare Storm sweeping between the heavens and earth in the distance, many thoughts instantly flashed through Yan Zhaoge's mind.

“Someone wishes to harm me, or is here for the stone pillar...”

“Decimating Abyss? Sacred Sun Clan? Remnants of Black Nightmare Mountain? Remnants of Five Spirit Flags? Or someone else?”

“Able to form and control Black Dragon Dreads in a fixed area without leaving behind any traces-with their understanding of the power of the Great Western Desert being thorough to this extent, it is most likely to be the remnants of Black Nightmare Mountain!”

“It also cannot be ruled out that they are working together with the Sacred Sun Clan, or perhaps in collusion with the Decimating Abyss, or even that they themselves are important members of the Decimating Abyss.”

The power of the Great Western Desert was too tyrannical, yet also profound and unpredictable, complicated and hard to

understand.

Whether it was Broad Creed Mountain, the Sacred Sun Clan or Infinite Boundless Mountain, they were currently still in a probing phase with regard to the Great Western Desert.

Of the Eight Extremities World of after the Great Calamity, there had not been anyone who had truly managed to completely grasp the power of this land of great perils.

However, if one were to speak of those who were the most familiar with the Great Western Desert, and thus possibly able to make use of a limited amount of its power, that would be none other than the past Wind Domain Sacred Ground Black Nightmare Mountain.

After Black Nightmare Mountain had been destroyed, some of its remnants had retreated into the Great Western Desert, and have been active by the border of the Great Western Desert and the Wind Domain's Four Regions all the way up till now.

While Yan Zhaoge had not had any official dealings with them before, he knew that they were known for their brutality, whilst also good at laying low and biding their time.

Their actions were sinister, and there were no means they were above using. But at the same time, they were also exceptionally cautious-if there were just the slightest signs of trouble, they would retreat back into concealment in the Great Western Desert.

These past years, while the remnants of Black Nightmare Mountain had been decreasing, they did not lack vicious, ruthless experts.

Swiftly scanning the crowd, Yan Zhaoge's gaze was deep and distant.

Within a few short breaths of time, gusting over rapidly from the distance, the Black Dragon Dread was already right before everyone's eyes!

Everyone unconsciously gazed at Yan Zhaoge, hoping that he would have a method to get them all through this perilous situation once more!

Earlier, where the stone pillar had been buried, he had been able to repel the Black Dragon Dread relying on the distorting and infighting of the phenomena of the desert itself. At the same time, the profound concept within the stone pillar had surfaced.

Such a method could only be used once.

Wanting to do as they had earlier, within a short period of time, even if Yan Zhaoge immediately buried the stone pillar back within the desert, there would also be no time to turn things around.

However, this did not stop everyone from placing their hopes on Yan Zhaoge at this moment as they treated him as their mainstay.

Yan Zhaoge's gaze swept across them once more as he looked at them deeply, before he said, "Everyone gather around me; don't get separated."

Hearing Yan Zhaoge's words, everyone immediately gathered around him.

'Elder Li' and 'Yao Shan' were at their forefront!

The two gathered around Yan Zhaoge, outwardly turning back to look at the assaulting hurricane whilst actually observing Yan Zhaoge in secret!

The massive Pan-Pan who was even bigger than an elephant was currently guarding behind Yan Zhaoge.

And Ah Hu, like always, was guarding behind Yan Zhaoge like a guardian spirit.

A cold light flashed through 'Elder Li's' eyes, "This time is different from the last!"

Remnant light flashing by the corner of his eye, he saw that youth Lian Ying currently staring fixedly at the girl Jun Luo's shadow.

Lian Ying bit his lips tightly, bloodstains already having appeared

on it at some point in time without him realising it.

In his eyes, he could only see Jun Luo walking towards Yan Zhaoge with a face full of joy, trust, admiration, praise, even some worship.

How he hoped that Jun Luo would also look at him with such an expression ah.

Lian Ying had not received the love and care of his family members since young; he was lacking love, lacking a sense of security, and was also often being bullied by his peers.

The sole exception was Jun Luo, who had never looked down on him, even having risked her life to save his in the Great Western Desert.

To Jun Luo, perhaps this was only the interaction with an ordinary friend.

But for Lian Ying, he had received care and warmth from her that he had never experienced before.

It was only that-he still wanted more!

He had always feared in secret that if it was not more and more, it might end up less and less.

The him with a somewhat sick, distorted mind irrevocably wanted to grab hold of that person tightly, never letting her go, that only light that existed in his life.

He could not stand her paying too much attention to others or pushing him to a corner.

Every young man who came near to Jun Luo was treated by him as a potential opponent, even his tribal brother Lian Cheng, who had suffered the same as him.

Even including this man before him who resembled a descended divinity.

Broad Creed Young Master, Yan Zhaoge!

The distance between the two was truly too great.

He was but a lowest lifeform of the Sand Region's Lian Family, a son born of a concubine who would never succeed in life.

The Sand Region's Lian Family was but a second-rate power under the Howling Wind Sword Sect.

While the Howling Wind Sword Sect was actually just one of the powers of the boundless territory that was ruled by Broad Creed Mountain.

One of Broad Creed Mountain's many Principal Elders was the First Seat of the Howling Wind Sword Sect.

Any one of Broad Creed Mountain's many Acting Elders would have to be treated like a honoured guest even by the Head of the Lian Family.

While Yan Zhaoge, at such a young age, could already cause Broad Creed Mountain's Principal Elders to lower their heads, and Acting Elders to bend their waists!

His distance with Lian Ying-how was it just one above the heavens, one below the earth?

He knew that Jun Luo's feelings for Yan Zhaoge were more likely that of worship and yearning, and not that between a man and a woman.

But even so, watching the two converse happily, his heart still felt like it was being shredded apart by tens of thousands of venomous snakes!

He had never conversed with Jun Luo like that before ah.

Luo Luo...this name that Yan Zhaoge used so easily was something that he, Lian Ying, had dreamed of saying innumerable times. Yet every time he tried he found it stuck in his mouth, unable to utter it.

Why...why was the distance between people so great?

As Lian Ying watched the conversation between Yan Zhaoge and Jun Luo, he felt for the first time how this only light that existed in his life was actually so far away from him!

“It can’t be like this! Broad Creed Young Master, so what? Even the Broad Creed Young Master cannot snatch you away!” Lian Ying bit his lips unbearably.

A pale, sick smile of tragedy appeared on his face, as he suddenly pulled out a black sword, stabbing it into his own arm!

Fresh blood scattered, landing on the yellow sands of the desert, the sand granules beneath suddenly turning white as snow!

HSSB 224: Have I Been Too Nice These Past Two Years?

Lifting the stone pillar, Yan Zhaoge gazed at the Black Dragon Dread in the distant horizon and at the people who were gathering around him.

As he observed them, he sent sound transmissions via aura-qi to Ah Hu and Feng Yunsheng, explaining the gist of the situation at hand.

“Those who can control the Black Dragon Dread must at least have the cultivation of a Martial Grandmaster,” Ah Hu currently had on a grave expression, his usual laziness and slickness completely gone from his face, “The other party not directly making a move, they should be wary of the Martial Grandmasters of our clan stationed here, at the same time also wanting to contain us.”

Feng Yunsheng gripped the hilt of her black sabre, “Relying fully on the power of the Black Dragon Dread, with that Martial Grandmaster not drawing near, he would also be unable to wield intricate control over it. Therefore, he would not have full confidence of achieving his goal.”

“Being able to bury us alive with the Black Dragon Dread would naturally be the best, but if that were not possible, it would at least also create chaos, taking us unawares and unprepared.”

Feng Yunsheng looked at Yan Zhaoge, “At that time, if someone

makes use of the chaos to make a move, their chances of success would be greatly increased...”

Yan Zhaoge’s gaze was deep and distant as he nodded slightly, not saying anything further.

Suddenly, Yan Zhaoge looked over, as he saw Lian Ying of the Lian Family, standing behind Jun Luo, suddenly draw out a black sword with a rather strange expression on his face.

Yan Zhaoge frowned, still thinking that he wanted to do harm to Jun Luo as he was about to go up to stop him. However, he then saw that the target of that black sword was actually Lian Ying himself.

The black sword stabbed into Lian Ying’s own arm, as a light noise instantly resounded.

Strange spiritual qi fluctuations emanated from the black sword and the wound on Lian Ying’s arm.

Yan Zhaoge’s gaze hardened, “Like a variation of some sort of blood sacrificial ceremony. Some sort of curse was hidden within his bloodstream by someone earlier?”

Fresh blood dripped down from Lian Ying’s arm, falling onto the ground below, which tainted the sand a snowy white colour.

A silhouette appeared within the air, condensing into an

indistinct massive spirit pattern, which then imprinted itself onto the ground below.

With Lian Ying as its centre, the snowy white colour rapidly spread out into the surroundings.

Instantly, beneath everyone's feet, intense quaking that resembled earthquakes could be felt, as the sea of sand, having turned white, suddenly became dangerous.

The sand beneath their feet seemed to turn completely into quicksand at this moment. As one stepped down onto it, they would immediately be trapped, sinking within!

Everyone was stunned, "...this is, White Dragon Dread?"

Everyone here were martial practitioners, all also being Martial Scholars other than Jun Luo, Lian Ying and Lian Cheng.

Feeling that something was wrong, they wanted to exert strength and leap up, yet found that they were unable to escape from the quicksand at their feet.

Even exerting the slightest bit of force, not only were they unable to pull their feet out of the quicksand, they even sank deeper within.

Whether their force exertions were tough or soft, the results were all the same. Attempting to wield their aura-qis, as soon as

their aura-qis came into contact with the white quicksand, they would immediately vanish without a trace!

In the sky overhead, the black storm rampaged, while beneath their feet, the dry sand of the desert had become a trap of quicksand, wanting to bury them alive.

After they sunk in, everyone did not dare to move rashly, for the more they struggled, the faster they would sink.

And unable to move, they could only watch on helplessly as the terrifying black storm was soon to descend upon them.

Jun Luo let out a startled cry, her foot hitting nothing as her body sunk downwards rapidly. Very quickly, almost half of her body had sunk into the white quicksand.

On the other side, Lian Cheng was the same.

In contrast, Lian Ying was still standing stably on the white sand, his steps like normal, as this instead appeared exceptionally strange.

Fresh blood fell unceasingly from the wound on his arm, his face also turning paler and paler, almost no blood visible on it at all as he looked weak beyond compare.

However, he appeared exceptionally excited, his face carrying a sick, emotional smile as he gazed at Jun Luo obsessively, “Luo Luo,

don't be scared. It'll be fine."

As Lian Ying walked towards Jun Luo, he said softly, "As long as you hug me tight, you won't have to fear sinking into the desert. I can freely take you along underground."

"This way, there would be nothing to fear of the Black Dragon Dread aboveground."

Revealing an infatuated expression, he spread his arms, as though wanting to hug Jun Luo, "See, Luo Luo, I am also not bad, right? Yan Zhaoge can save you; I can too."

That black sword was still deeply stabbed into the wound on his arm, blood trickling out unceasingly.

Hearing his words, while they were in the midst of a dangerous situation, everyone was slightly taken aback as some gazes could not help but turn to look at Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge looked at Lian Ying, "One Heart Blood Curse-this is already not simply something within the confines of the martial dao, having more to do with the occult arts. However, this still has the price of burning your lifeblood, resembling a sacrifice."

"While you have caused a White Dragon Dread, with your qi and blood, you do not have long left to live."

Yan Zhaoge raised his brows slightly, "Making use of the

connection between your blood curse and this natural disaster, you can indeed traverse freely within the White Dragon Dread within a short period of time, and those with you can similarly also be brought along, not having to worry about the quicksand.”

“However, this would drag that person into the One Heart Blood Curse, that person’s lifeblood becoming a sacrifice for the curse along with yours, very quickly meeting the same fate as you, dying due to qi and blood depletion.”

“Do you want Luo Luo to die along with you?”

Hearing Yan Zhaoge’s words, Jun Luo stared at Lian Ying in utter disbelief.

Lian Cheng, who had grown up together with Lian Ying, was even more shell-shocked, only feeling that this tribal brother of his had suddenly become a stranger to him, and terrifyingly so.

Meeting Jun Luo’s gaze, Lian Ying’s expression changed slightly, an indecisive unwillingness appearing on his face for a moment.

But very quickly, he laughed lightly, “Not born of the same quilt, yet dying in the same tomb—that’s good enough.”

Lian Ying stared at Yan Zhaoge, “At least it beats helplessly watching Luo Luo walk closer and closer to another man.”

“Yan Zhaoge, you are a favoured son of Heaven, presiding loftily

above others, soon to become a new legend. Compared to those high up like you, how many are there like me who live like dust, like rotten mud? But what, just because you stand above, you can tread on us however you like, can even snatch away the final bit of light there is in my life?”

“Impossible! I may be weak, but I still have try to pull you down from your pedestal, seeing your sorry appearance when covered in mud, how exactly it looks like, and whether you can still can continue presiding loftily above like this!”

The weak youth roared emotionally.

At the same time, the white quicksand on the ground surged, the black storm in the sky howling.

Aside from the White Dragon Dread that had suddenly appeared beneath their feet, the Black Dragon Dread formed of the original Black Nightmare Storm, obscuring the heavens and covering the earth, was already before them, the terrifying black gales sweeping down towards everyone!

Yan Zhaoge’s expression was tranquil, as, the pillar still supported in his hand, he remained unmoving where he was, with purple light of thunder suddenly flashing within his right eye!

At the same time, flipping his left palm, a small black incense burner appeared within, which he casually tossed to Ah Hu, “Deal with the White Dragon Dread, and get Luo Luo and the others out.”

Ah Hu responded affirmatively, gazing at Lian Ying with an unfriendly look on his face.

“Although I don’t actually understand what exactly you’re whining about,” Yan Zhaoge’s gaze was focused on the Black Nightmare Storm as he didn’t even look at Lian Ying, “Is it because I have become too nice these past two years that everyone wants to try to step on me in order to prove their own worth?”

HSSB 225: Don't Look At Him, I Was Asking You

As Yan Zhaoge focused on the Black Nightmare Storm, the purple light of thunder suddenly flickered within his right eye.

Illuminated by that light, the world that had originally dulled due to the black hurricane suddenly became bright once more.

With a low yell, purplish green thunderbolts shot out from his right eye, landing on the massive stone pillar.

Numerous light patterns lit up on the surface of that stone pillar once more, following which it emanated infinite radiance, extending outwards in all directions.

Numerous radiances entangled with the black hurricane, locking it in place.

And meanwhile, holding the Earth Devouring Burner, Ah Hu knelt, letting it touch the spreading snow white quicksand.

While he was unable to activate its effects with his own power, just as the two touched, the Earth Devouring Burner suddenly emanated a strange suction force, not devouring the white quicksand, as the sand instead quickly resumed its original appearance.

Lian Ying stared stupefied at this scene, the smile on his face vanishing, though his expression only became more distorted.

He grabbed the black sword that was still embedded in his arm, forcibly slicing and increasing the size of the wound, as more fresh blood flowed, descending onto the sand below.

However, as compared to the suction force of the Earth Devouring Burner, Lian Ying's movements were clearly like adding water into a rapidly leaking bucket, being utterly inadequate.

He stood there dazedly, his body becoming weaker and weaker, the world before his eyes getting more and more blurry.

His extreme excitement could no longer conceal his increasing fatigue and the intensifying chill in his body, as he could finally feel the life flowing unceasingly away from his body.

His body gradually grew limp and collapsed on the ground, dark light circulating on the black sword embedded in his arm, which actually emanated a seductive feel.

While his skin grew paler and paler, gradually beginning to shrivel.

That symbol imprinted on the ground tried to resist the Earth Devouring Burner, but originally not being its match, now also no longer able to receive the nourishment of Lian Ying's lifeblood, it stood no chance.

It gradually also began being absorbed by the Earth Devouring Burner.

Standing there, Ah Hu reached out and touched his ears a little, looking expressionlessly from the corner of his eye at the life gradually fading away from Lian Ying. After that, he no longer heeded it, retracting his gaze and walking towards Jun Luo and the others trapped in the quicksand, helping them to escape.

The world before his eyes having become blurry, Lian Ying struggled to look at Jun Luo, seeing the look of disbelief that was still on her face, not yet having faded.

Him being soon to die was not something to fear; what he feared was that that girl would not be accompanying him in death.

Was he destined to forever lose this only light in his life? Returning to that completely dark, desolate world once more.

“I don’t want it ah!” Lian Ying muttered to himself, swivelling his head with great difficulty, wanting to find the person who had given him the black sword earlier, “This is different from what we agreed on ah...it shouldn’t be like this...it shouldn’t...”

Lian Ying’s eyes were wide open, unwilling to close, but they had already lost their light.

The Yao Shan who was impersonating Elder Li similarly didn’t

even spare Lian Ying a glance.

To him, this chess piece had already served its intended use, at the same time having lost all its value, no longer needing him to waste his mind on it.

He was currently fully focused on Yan Zhaoge, on the light of thunder emanated from his right eye!

That terrifying force caused him to feel a bit of passion even as it caused his heart to tremble, as he felt a yearning to rush out and gain possession of it.

‘Elder Li’ immediately suppressed the greed within his heart, regaining his former calm, “Very good, the Black Dragon Dread has successfully depleted the power of his Sacred Artifact fragment, also drawing away his attention.”

Turning his gaze back to Ah Hu who was currently suppressing the White Dragon Dread with the Earth Devouring Burner, at the same time saving people from the quicksand, “His follower who’s an elite Martial Scholar has also been successfully sent away...”

‘Elder Li’ sucked in a deep breath, sending a sound transmission with his aura-qi over to his companion by the side, “Now’s our chance, move!”

“You contain that Pixiu; I’ll take Yan Zhaoge’s life!”

Saying thus, the 'Elder Li' who earlier had already slowly neared Yan Zhaoge, quietly and unremarkably continued moving closer to him from behind him.

While 'Yao Shan' also did the same, casually moving over to separate Yan Zhaoge and Pan-Pan.

The two were not underestimating Yan Zhaoge in the least.

While they had already depleted the power of Yan Zhaoge's Sacred Artifact fragment beforehand, also using a stratagem to draw away his and Ah Hu's attention, they still had to try for the greatest chance.

They had to move in as close as possible, before erupting for a sure, instant kill!

However, not waiting for 'Elder Li' and 'Yao Shan' to achieve the ideal distances that they wanted, after they had taken just a single step, something happened!

The Pan-Pan who whilst being massive, had always maintained a lazy, foolish and pure as well as clumsy and dazed appearance, suddenly had a fierce light erupt in his eyes!

With a low roar, Pan-Pan suddenly exerted strength with his feet, rushing out madly, resembling a mountain collapsing!

His target, was precisely 'Elder Li'!

‘Elder Li’s’ pupils suddenly dilated, “Was he set off by the Black Dragon Dread and the White Dragon Dread? Or...”

There was not much time for him to consider this as while Pan-Pan’s figure was big, his speed was extraordinarily fast, his momentum like speeding thunder, crushing and trampling over all existences that stood before him, with a violent momentum that left everyone shocked.

That body like a small mountain was immediately before ‘Elder Li’, pressuring towards him like a collapsing mountain peak!

‘Elder Li’s’ face immediately turned ugly to the extreme.

If he didn’t withstand or evade with all he had, he would be trodden into a meat patty by the gigantic beast before him.

But if he really exerted force to block or evade, he would be exposed!

While the Imitation Killing Jade could imitate the appearance of the one killed, even able to imitate the person’s aura till it seemed real, he was, after all, not truly a Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioner!

As soon as he made a move, he would immediately expose his true background.

However, in such a situation, ignoring why Pan-Pan had suddenly grew berserk, if it was the real Elder Li, what reason would there be for him to stand there like a piece of wood, foolishly waiting to be trodden to death by Pan-Pan!

Letting out a long sigh towards the heavens, the Yao Shan who was imitating Elder Li abruptly retreated rapidly!

His fist-intent erupted, as his retreat actually seemed to hold a similar concept to the Black Nightmare Storm within the sky that was still yet to calm.

The illusory heaven and earth formed of his aura-qi was of a boundless black hurricane that enveloped the surrounding area.

Of the direct lineage of the past Wind Domain Sacred Ground Black Nightmare Mountain, this was the Black Nightmare Godly Wind!

This sudden turn of events took most of those present by surprise. Just seeing Yan Zhaoge's Pixiu steed suddenly turn berserk and rush towards Elder Li alone, they had already been a little unable to react to it.

However, what happened after left them dazed like wooden chickens.

A Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioner, the Acting Elder Elder Li, actually displayed the direct lineage martial arts of Black

Nightmare Mountain!

While the descendants of Black Nightmare Mountain were already extremely rare, this was still the Wind Domain. Of those who were active around these parts, how could they not recognise the direct lineage martial arts of Black Nightmare Mountain whose fame once shook the Eight Extremities World?

Yao Shan's face was expressionless, having known as soon as he had retreated that it would be hard for him to succeed today. Looking for his companion through the corner of his eye, he saw that he who had originally been in charge of containing Pan-Pan was currently being blocked by Feng Yunsheng.

Swivelling his head over at this moment, Yan Zhaoge looked calmly at Yao Shan who had on the appearance of 'Elder Li', "So, is it that I have been too nice these past two years, thus causing people to think that I am good to bully?"

"Did you think I was asking that one surnamed Lian just now? I was asking you."

HSSB 226: You Are Not In A Position To Ask

Yan Zhaoge's gaze landed on the Yao Shan who was completely identical to Elder Li in appearance.

“Not only the appearance, even the breathing and the aura can also be imitated. Not truly making a move, even fellow disciples of the same clan would not be able to tell,” Yan Zhaoge said coldly, “Is it the Imitation Killing Jade?”

Since it was the Imitation Killing Jade, this meant that this appearance's original owner, the real Elder Li, had already perished.

Looking at Yao Shan, Yan Zhaoge's gaze was cold.

Stared at by Yan Zhaoge like this, even the experienced Yao Shan felt a chill in his heart.

Although he didn't know where they had gone wrong, since they had already been found out by Yan Zhaoge, Yao Shan's first thought was to immediately retreat.

With Yan Zhaoge being prepared, Yao Shan didn't have the confidence to kill him.

Since that was so, there would be no point in staying and fighting; it might even be a meaningless struggle that ended in them pointlessly giving their lives away.

Not succeeding with a single strike, immediately escaping a thousand kilometres away, thinking up a next plan of action.

This was what Yao Shan had thought, but when he wanted to retreat, he discovered that it was not as easy as he had thought-in fact, far from it.

Pan-Pan's aura was ferocious, completely different from his silly, clumsy laziness of earlier as white flames and black water appeared about his entire body.

The white flames enveloped Pan-Pan, while numerous streams of black water expanded, immediately covering the entire area, resembling a cage as it trapped Yao Shan within.

Yao Shan tried to forcibly break through the obstruction of the cage of black water, but just having his footsteps slowed down slightly by the streams of black water, Pan-Pan was already before him, forcing him to have to use his full strength to face him.

After evading one of Pan-Pan's attacks, the cage of black water before him had regained its original form, even having become stronger than before.

As time passed, the streams of black water were clearly becoming denser and denser.

Yao Shan had originally thought to forcibly take one of Pan-Pan's

attacks, risking it as he broke out of the encirclement, but the white flames about Pan-Pan's body held an extremely violent power.

This caused a despairing Yao Shan to discover that if he dared to only care about escaping, taking Pan-Pan's full-powered blow, he would probably be heavily injured on the spot, basically unable to run.

This Pixiu of Yan Zhaoge's was even more formidable than they had predicted.

He looked over to the side, seeing that companion masqueraded as him shockingly also being obstructed, unable to extricate himself.

Yao Shan's heart immediately sunk.

Having returned from saving Jun Luo and the others, Ah Hu bared his teeth, chuckling coldly at them, "Black Nightmare Godly Wind; hehe, I happen to cultivate in it too. How about we spar for a bit?"

Hearing his words, the two just snorted, not saying anything.

The other Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners now finally understood the situation, their expressions strange as they looked at Yao Shan, still in the guise of Elder Li.

Hearing Yan Zhaoge mention the Imitation Killing Jade, those who had heard of it before all came to a sudden realisation, as the gazes that were directed at Yao Shan also turned cold.

Yao Shan looked at Yan Zhaoge rather unresignedly, “You didn’t move personally, also not asking that tiger of yours to move, instead asking your Pixiu steed to pretend to have lost control of its emotions and come to test me. You actually also weren’t certain of it, right?”

“Only when I was forced to evade your Pixiu’s attack, revealing my martial foundation, did you see through my secret.”

Yan Zhaoge laughed indifferently, “You seem to have gotten something wrong. Now, it is you who have fallen into my hands. Afterwards, it should be you who’ll answer some of my questions regarding you remnants of Black Nightmare Mountain. While you—do you think you still have the leisure to ask me questions now?”

Yao Shan’s brows were tightly knit, “I followed Elder Li for a long time, having been a confidante of his since long ago. I know that I am much more familiar with his habits and style than you Yan Zhaoge; where exactly did I reveal a flaw, leading to your wariness?”

“Why must I explain to you?” Yan Zhaoge chortled, “Explaining to you wherein your flaw lay, then introducing my plan in detail.”

“How would it be as troublesome as that; you only need to know what you will be facing after this.”

Turning away, Yan Zhaoge said mildly to Ah Hu, “I want them alive; wring out everything they know.”

Having already captured the other, Ah Hu now smiled coldly as he entered the cage of black water to deal with Yao Shan.

Yao Shan let out a loud, resentful howl, resisting with all his might, yet was hard pressed to stand against Ah Hu.

The streams of black water of Pan-Pan’s innate talents restricted Yao Shan unceasingly, making it such that it would be hard even if the latter wanted to take his own life.

Jun Luo and Lian Cheng also regained their wits at this moment, their emotions complicated as they looked at the dried up corpse of Lian Ying as well as the two attackers.

Meanwhile, the Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners glared hatefully at the two attackers, especially feeling much anger and hatred when seeing Yao Shan currently with the appearance of Elder Li.

Having finished speaking to Ah Hu, Yan Zhaoge’s attention returned to the stone pillar on his palm.

The stone pillar shot out radiance in all directions, transforming into a formless barrier which helped shield them from the wind and the rain, keeping away the still rampaging black storm within

the air.

The Black Dragon Dread was fierce and cruel, but along with that, while arriving quickly, it also left quickly.

Withstanding it in safety for a time, it would gradually begin weakening.

When the fierceness of this time's Black Dragon Dread passed, while the Black Nightmare Storm that would remain afterwards was still violent and formidable, its power shocking, even without the help of the stone pillar, Yan Zhaoge and the others would still be able to resist it.

Seeing the Black Dragon Dread before their eyes already beginning to ease gradually, Yan Zhaoge nodded slightly.

Keeping her sabre, Feng Yunsheng returned to his side, asking in a low voice, "If it was the Imitation Killing Jade, Elder Li should already be dead."

Yan Zhaoge was momentarily silent before he nodded, Feng Yunsheng also feeling slightly down.

Having come to Suzhou City, it was Elder Li who had received them, then acted as their guide, entering the Great Western Desert together.

Along the way, the capable Elder Li had handled everything very

competently, at the same time extremely friendly in his interactions with Yan Zhaoge, Feng Yunsheng and Ah Hu.

Feng Yunsheng gazed at Yao Shan, “I wonder when Elder Li was harmed, and how his corpse was disposed of.”

Yan Zhaoge answered, “The Imitation Killing Jade has a time limit, and to be on the safe side, he wouldn’t have made his move too early. The first coming of a Black Dragon Dread was the first time they tried to kill me—he should most likely have killed Elder Li not long before then.”

“Counting the time, this is the second time they’ve acted, and also their final chance. Not long after, the Imitation Killing Jade’s effects should be wearing off.”

Hearing his words, Feng Yunsheng said, “Elder Li is a Xiantian Martial Scholar. If he died, the deterioration of his qi and blood would have emanated naturally. If he was harmed in that place where you pulled out the stone pillar, Elder Li’s corpse must not have been buried. Along the way, we have not felt the stench of death or blood.”

“If they carried along Elder Li’s corpse with them, there should be a Shadow Shrinking Pouch.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “One person masquerading as Elder Li, the other moving about as him. The additional person should have been waiting in that Shadow Shrinking Pouch beforehand.”

Feng Yunsheng asked, “Right, I also want to know-how did you find them out?”

HSSB 227: Spirit Patterns Of Before The Great Calamity

Yan Zhaoge similarly replied through sound transmission, “Since I knew that they wanted to make use of the chaos caused by the Black Dragon Dread to kill me, I naturally had to observe carefully.”

“When the Black Dragon Dread descended, I asked everyone to gather around me. As they did so, they naturally all looked at me, wanting to know what plan I had.”

“There were only these two who, other than looking at me, also kept on observing Ah Hu’s and Pan-Pan’s positions. Thinking carefully, it also seemed to be so during the first Black Dragon Dread.”

“Why were they concerned about Ah Hu and Pan-Pan?”

Yan Zhaoge curled his lips, “I could take them both as liking men, having set their sights on Ah Hu...”

Although he couldn’t hear Yan Zhaoge’s voice, the Ah Hu who was currently in the midst of capturing Yao Shan involuntarily shivered, almost giving Yao Shan a chance to commit suicide.

Yan Zhaoge casually continued, “However, why did they also take note of Pan-Pan? Unless their tastes were unique to that point?”

Hearing his words, Feng Yunsheng did not know whether to laugh or to cry.

While Yan Zhaoge's words were humorous, his tone didn't hold the slightest frivolity, "In the eyes of the outside world, not only is Ah Hu my retainer, he is also my guard."

"It's fine when Ah Hu isn't there, but as long as Ah Hu is by my side, those who want to assassinate me all know-want to kill Yan, first kill Hu."

"If they don't have Martial Grandmasters, wanting to get me, they would first have to consider how to break through Ah Hu's protection."

"Meanwhile, Pan-Pan has also always stayed near me. A spirit beast guards its owner, and however lazy Pan-Pan usually looks, Pixius are extremely talented and powerful. Moreover, just with his great size, he naturally forms a barrier even just standing by my side, that they would have to go around."

The Black Dragon Dread gradually passed, the light patterns on the stone pillar similarly vanishing as the light of thunder shining within Yan Zhaoge's eyes also gradually dimmed.

Seeing Yao Shan already having been captured by Ah Hu, Yan Zhaoge said mildly, "The Black Dragon Dreads were not just to create chaos, but also to deplete the power of the Sacred Artifact fragment I possess."

Feng Yunsheng nodded, going forward to remind Ah Hu, who also nodded, “I’ve searched, and there indeed is a Shadow Shrinking Pouch. I’ve not checked its contents yet, though.”

Receiving the Shadow Shrinking Pouch, Feng Yunsheng opened it, indeed discovering Elder Li’s corpse inside.

Elder Li had already been dead for a long time. The qi and blood of his corpse had already gradually completely deteriorated, but as he had been a Xiantian Martial Scholar in his life, with their strength, they still currently didn’t show any signs of rotting.

The other Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners gathered around, looking at the deceased Elder Li. Also seeing Yao Shan, still in Elder Li’s appearance, who had been caught by Ah Hu, they instantly felt an anger welling that could not be suppressed.

Elder Li’s face had already grown stiff, but the stunned expression on his face had not yet faded, his eyes wide open like bottomless pits, not having died in peace.

Yan Zhaoge came before Elder Li. While lifting that massive stone pillar with his right hand, he bent down, reaching out with his left hand and gently shutting Elder Li’s eyes.

“Wring everything they know out of them; there will be no need to keep them then,” Yan Zhaoge stood up straight once more, saying to Ah Hu, who unhesitatingly answered, “Yes, Young Master.”

Yao Shan looked defeated as he lowered his head, not speaking, while his struggling companion said, “However it is, we will still die. You still think for us to provide you with information?”

Ah Hu turned and glanced at him, grinning savagely, “Sometimes, death actually isn’t scary.”

Yan Zhaoge raised his head to look at the Black Nightmare Storm that was gradually returning to normal, his eyes slightly narrowing into slits, “Black Nightmare Mountain...”

Shaking his head, Yan Zhaoge examined the things obtained from the two.

The valuable objects there were limited. What caught more of Yan Zhaoge’s notice were mainly two items.

The first was another, still unused Imitation Killing Jade, found on the body of Yao Shan’s companion.

Fingering the Imitation Killing Jade, Yan Zhaoge fell into deep thought.

The Imitation Killing Jade had many limitations, such as that of time, as well as the cultivation bases of the killer and the killed.

However, it was undeniable that this thing could prove

extremely useful at times.

Especially when the killer was extremely familiar with the killed, understanding most of his habits as well as manner of speaking, in which case the imitation could mostly likely be successfully achieved.

Yao Shan was a good example of this. Masquerading as Elder Li, before the descent of the second Black Dragon Dread, Yan Zhaoge had indeed not suspected anything.

While he currently had no use for it, remaining in his hands, it might come in useful sometime.

Even if Yan Zhaoge himself did not use it, handing it over to someone he trusted, it should also be able to bring about some unexpected effects.

As for the second item, originating from Yao Shan, it was a semi-circular jade coin, looking from its style to be extremely ancient.

Observing it carefully, Yan Zhaoge found that it should have been from a complete jade coin, having been split into two right from its hole in the middle, the whereabouts of the other piece unknown.

The jade coin had patterns on its surface. While they were simple, they had a majestic air about them, leaving those who saw them with a deep impression of them.

Yan Zhaoge carefully identified it for a moment, finding it somewhat unexpected, “Oh, actually spirit patterns from before the Great Calamity?”

The spirit patterns were not words, not containing any special meaning to them.

However, after analysing them for a moment, Yan Zhaoge could confirm that if it was the complete jade coin with the complete spirit patterns, it would be a small-scale spirit formation.

This small-scale spirit formation perhaps had some rather valuable things contained within.

“Looking at where it is broken and the extent of the dispersion of spiritual qi, this jade coin should have been split into two not long ago,” Yan Zhaoge analysed for a bit, “The other half could be in this part of the Wind Domain, very possibly in the Sand Region.”

“Along this line, I can instruct people to perform a meticulous search for it.”

“This type of spirit pattern was also rather rare before the time of the Great Calamity. The number of people who can identify them as well as activate the spirit formation within should be very limited in the Eight Extremities World now. Therefore, the information contained within the spirit formation most likely has not been deciphered.”

As he pondered, Yan Zhaoge didn't put it too much to heart, just shrugging his shoulders as he kept the two items.

Ah Hu directly brought the two enemies into that Shadow Shrinking Pouch.

Afterwards, they still had to hurry along as much as possible, leaving the Great Western Desert.

And things like interrogation could not be rushed, with slow grinding easier to break through the psychological defences of the captives.

Therefore, keeping the Shadow Shrinking Pouch, Yan Zhaoge led them along on their way.

Although they didn't know what methods Ah Hu had to force the mouths of the two open, bringing along Elder Li's corpse, the Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners under Elder Li all had looks of expectation on their faces, their hatred having been sated.

Feng Yunsheng's expression was as per usual while looking at Yan Zhaoge keep the trio in the Shadow Shrinking Pouch, while Jun Luo and Lian Cheng had rather complex looks within their gazes.

HSSB 228: The Results Of The Investigation

The other Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners ignored Lian Ying's body, lying on the ground.

Earlier, when he, Jun Luo, and Lian Cheng were trapped in the Black Dragon Dread, Yan Zhaoge had rescued them. No one had thought that this unassuming boy would repay this kindness with evil. In the critical situation that had just occurred, Lian Ying had almost been able to deliver a fatal strike.

If Yan Zhaoge hadn't been able to get them out of their predicament in such a short time, they would have been forced to simultaneously defend against the Black Dragon Dread aboveground, while also guarding against the White Dragon Dread at their feet.

Considering the death of Elder Li, the very fact that the Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners hadn't vented their rage against Lian Ying was already quite good.

Looking at Lian Ying's corpse, Lian Cheng let out a sigh. After a moment, he went forward to gather up Lian Ying's remains.

Back in the clan, both he and Lian Cheng suffered from the same sickly body and had many of the same difficulties. Because of this, they were quite close.

Both of them were born to concubines and lost their parents at an early age. Moreover, their temperament was often seen as

effeminate and weak, causing them often be bullied in their clan.

Stumbling along the bumpy road of growing up together, they considered each other as one of the pitifully few friends and family they possessed.

It was only that Lian Ying had gradually become alienated from him since some unknown time, causing Lian Cheng to be puzzled.

After hearing what Lian Ying had said and observing his actions, only now did Lian Cheng realize that Lian Ying's behavior changed after meeting Jun Luo.

In fact, it was the same for Lian Cheng. Wasn't Jun Luo a rarely seen light in his life?

Even though Lian Ying had unkind intentions and had almost caused him to sink into the White Dragon Dread, Lian Cheng still had a soft spot for him in his heart. Even now, he could not bear to let Lian Ying's corpse be left in this empty expanse of the desert.

Even though he was already dead, his final resting place should at least be in his birthplace.

Looking at Lian Cheng, Jun Luo hesitated for a moment while biting her lip.

When her gaze landed on Lian Ying's corpse, her emotions were extremely complicated. When her gaze landed on Lian Cheng, her

expression softened.

After a long pause, Jun Luo also sighed before stepping forward to help Lian Cheng. After resolving the matter with Lian Ying's corpse, they prepared to leave the Great Western Desert.

The Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners looked at this scene, neither offering to help nor stopping to wait for them. Bearing the body of Elder Li, they stood silently as they waited for Yan Zhaoge's instructions.

Yan Zhaoge glanced at Jun Luo. "Luo Luo, this is the true, normal state of the outside world. Rather, this isn't something which would be considered special—just like there is a glamorous, bright side of world, there is also a side which is filled with underhanded, bloody affairs.

Bloody and callous sudden assassination, prompted by exploiting the most vulnerable part of a person's psyche. The struggle between two great powers would always drag others into the conflict.

Black Nightmare Mountain had been destroyed a long time ago, but even now, its remnants wanted to retaliate. Their target was not someone from the upper echelons of Broad Creed Mountain, but rather the Yan Zhaoge of great repute. Despite his lofty status and impressive achievements, his cultivation was still rather low since he had not even stepped into the Martial Grandmaster realm.

Of course, the impact of their conflict could not compare to the

likes of a battle between two Sacred Grounds.

Even so, the ripples from such a conflict were still far more than enough to destroy people like Lian Cheng, Lian Ying, or Jun Luo.

Even if they didn't wish to be involved, once they were drawn in their participation would be completely involuntary. If they died, they probably wouldn't even know how they died.

Even at the moment of the death, Lian Ying still didn't really understand that all along, he was just a pawn of Yao Shan. Even Yao Shan himself could only be considered someone else's chess piece in the greater scheme of things.

Yao Shan wouldn't even be considered to be a key piece of the plan, just an auxiliary piece.

After gathering Lian Ying's remains, Lian Cheng stood up beside Jun Luo. Jun Luo bit her lower lip as she looked toward Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge calmly said, "The enmity between my clan and Black Nightmare Mountain is something that you do not have the strength to participate in. However, you also cannot prevent being involuntarily dragged into this conflict. This is not your fault. Rather, it can only be blamed on this war itself."

For people like Jun Luo or Lian Cheng, their status made it almost impossible to avoid the ripples caused by these high-level

conflicts.

Speaking of being dragged into a conflict, such a thing could happen with almost no warning at all.

“And your Howling Wind Sword Sect, amongst other power of its level, its influence is not small. If a war erupted between your sect and another, such methods would also come into play.”

Jun Luo was silent for a moment, before responding in a low voice. “Brother Yan, I understand what you mean now.”

Then, she stubbornly added, “But I still believe that there is more to the outside world than just this bloodshed.”

Seeing Jun Luo’s eyes which were still bright with anticipation, Yan Zhaoge laughed lightly. “I didn’t mean to dictate anything for you. Rather, I just wanted to give you a reminder. Don’t forget that if anything terrible happens for you, Uncle Jun and the others will be heartbroken.”

Jun Luo nodded her head. “Yes, Brother Yan.”

Yan Zhaoge spoke again. “Alright, let’s set off. Let’s wait until we are out of the Great Western Desert before we discuss other things.”

The others all nodded their agreement. Following Yan Zhaoge, the group began to retrace their steps as they headed back on the

road to Suzhou City.

As they were walking, Feng Yunsheng sent a sound transmission to Yan Zhaoge. “The little girl isn’t bad.”

Yan Zhaoge held the stone pillar with his right hand as he continued walking. Laughing slightly, he responded, “That year, did you also pass by this area like she did?”

Feng Yunsheng laughed, “More or less. I was almost captured by a human trafficker and sold as a slave.”

Yan Zhaoge turned around to look her in the eye.

Feng Yunsheng was quite calm as she recounted. “When I was in the Sacred Sun Clan, even though I often went outside the clan to train, it was mostly with regard to fighting and killing. Even then, I always had someone from the senior generation watching over me so even if I suffered a defeat, I never truly had to worry about my life.”

“Afterwards, when I fled from the clan and had no one to rely on, I had to escape from my pursuers while staying low-key. In this way, I had traveled through roughly half of the Fire Domain.”

“In the course of my escape, I experienced many things and met many people. I even made some friends, but...” Feng Yunsheng paused and lightly laughed before continuing. “The very first friend I made while escaping seemed to be just and warm. When he

treated me as a friend, I was extremely touched.”

“At that time, I had just narrowly escaped from an attack by the Sacred Sun Clan. Even though I had managed to escape, I was also grievously injured. When that person met me, he kindly brought me to someplace safe where I could recover from my injuries.”

Feng Yunsheng smiled. “Who would have thought, he was actually a human trafficker who wanted to drug me and sell me off to other people. He even had a buyer already lined up. If it wasn’t for the fact that I found out his plan, I would probably be caged up in some person’s household.”

Yan Zhaoge’s mouth twitched. “I won’t need to ask about the outcome of that trafficker then.”

Feng Yunsheng let out a laugh, and didn’t say any more.

After leaving the Great Western Desert, even though the scenery was still endless yellow sand, that constant fear of Black Nightmare Storms was left behind.

Before they had reached Suzhou City, Ah Hu’s interrogation had yielded some results.

HSSB 229: Second Refinement Of The Pillar Of The Divine Palace

Yan Zhaoge had never been worried as to whether or not Ah Hu would be able to open the two assailant's mouths.

Because he had already handed the Cold Marrow Needles technique to Ah Hu.

Other than this final method, Ah Hu also possessed many other interrogation methods.

This big fella who looked simple and honest was proficient in many areas, making him a very dependable subordinate. It was just that he had not had a chance to put many of his professional skills on display before.

Ah Hu had indeed lived up to all their expectations, having wrung from the two what Yan Zhaoge wanted before they had reached Suzhou City.

“Indeed connected to the Decimating Abyss,” Yan Zhaoge stroked his lower jaw, “Of the remnants of Black Nightmare Mountain, a considerable portion, whilst not falling to the dark side, have joined the Decimating Abyss.”

“However, most of them still retain their independence, while at the same time also guarding against the Decimating Abyss and the Nine Underworlds in secret. But the two sides still maintain

contact?”

“These people are mainly funded by the Sacred Sun Clan? This was within my earlier predictions.”

Hearing Ah Hu’s report, Yan Zhaoge muttered to himself.

Ah Hu imitated him, also stroking his lower chin, “I just don’t know how much the Sacred Sun Clan know about the Decimating Abyss’s situation, with their connection with the remnants of Black Nightmare Mountain? The positions of those two were still a little too low, with the useful information being limited.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “No, actually, it’s already sufficient, especially knowing that a considerable portion of those Black Nightmare Mountain remnants who joined the Decimating Abyss and had left the Wind Domain before have returned again to the Wind Domain in recent months. This piece of information is very important—perhaps they are planning to make another move.”

After considering for a moment, Yan Zhaoge told Ah Hu, “Make two copies of the information that you obtained. Send one back to the Mountain and one to the First Seat Elder of the Sand Region.”

Ah Hu nodded, going off to arrange it.

Yan Zhaoge turned and gazed back in the direction of the Great Western Desert, where the sky was still dark and gloomy.

Somewhere out there was at least one Black Nightmare Mountain Martial Grandmaster who had caused two Black Dragon Dreads earlier.

Yan Zhaoge was similarly certain that Broad Creed Mountain's Principal Elder who was nearest to here, in charge of sitting over the Howling Wind Sword Sect, had currently also arrived in the Great Western Desert, thereby deterring the Martial Grandmasters of Black Nightmare Mountain from personally making a move.

Accompanied by Yan Zhaoge safely bringing that stone pillar out of the Great Western Desert, the Principal Elder also retreated from that dangerous area. However, he did not go far, temporarily remaining at the borders of the Great Western Desert.

The group returned to Suzhou City. Elder Li had been Acting Elder in Suzhou City for so many years, and everyone rather looked up to him. Hearing of the bad news, the Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners here all felt pain and grief.

As the First Seat Elder of the Sand Region and the Principal Elder of the Howling Wind Sword Sect received the news of Elder Li's death, as they sent over a letter of consolation, they also dispatched a new Acting Elder to take up office here in Suzhou.

Before the new Acting Elder of Suzhou arrived, Yan Zhaoge would be temporarily remaining here.

Yan Zhaoge's current identity as well as position was rather special. In theory, even the Sand Region's First Seat Elder would be

unable to restrict him.

What requests he had, figures like the Principal Elder of the Howling Wind Sword Sect would even have to try to satisfy him as best they could.

While his age and cultivation were still limited, after Yan Zhaoge had left the clan and come here, his position had become exceptionally lofty.

However, Yan Zhaoge's current efforts were still mainly focused on that stone pillar which he had brought out of the Great Western Desert.

Entering Suzhou City, arriving at the lodgings that had been allocated to him, Yan Zhaoge finally set the massive stone pillar down.

As the stone pillar was placed on the ground, the dust all around did not arise as it seemed to hold no weight at all, just like when Yan Zhaoge had been carrying it. However, only those who truly dared to try would know how heavy this thing really was.

Yan Zhaoge was certain that if not for him already having achieved initial refinement, even if he had stepped into the Martial Grandmaster realm, he would be unable to lift the pillar up.

Since he had already achieved initial refinement of the stone pillar in the Great Western Desert, while staying in Suzhou City

this time, Yan Zhaoge was preparing to refine it a second time.

On entering the city just now, Yan Zhaoge's manner of carrying such a massive stone pillar had already led to him being surrounded by spectating crowds.

It truly was flashy, but if it went on like this all the way, it might just be too flashy for words.

Not speaking of anything else, just bringing along this giant fella that could not be placed within a Shadow Shrinking Pouch, no matter where he went, everyone would know that it was he who had come, making him unable to conceal his movements at all.

Like carrying around a torch in the darkness of the night, and also a torch which could not be readily extinguished.

Let everyone know that I am here.

These words sounded pretty heartening, pretty cool, pretty flashy, pretty arrogant.

However, if a few more words were added at the front, the meaning would completely change.

For example, 'I can only let everyone know that I am here'...

Yan Zhaoge sat on the empty ground of the courtyard in the

meditative position, raising his head and gazing at the pillar of the divine palace on the ground before him, more than twenty metres in height, virtually even higher than the walls of Suzhou City.

He traced some lines in mid-air with one hand, his aura-qi leaving marks behind as lines were inscribed one after another, forming abstruse patterns.

Afterwards, these silhouetted patterns were sealed together within a crystal.

These patterns were those that were on the surface of the pillar of the Divine Palace, recorded down by Yan Zhaoge.

Also sealed within was Yan Zhaoge's deciphering and understanding of these patterns.

The patterns on the stone pillar themselves did not contain any special meaning, but they held unique principles as well as concept within.

Viewed by a martial practitioner with a lower cultivation base, they would find it hard to understand its profundities as well as value, but if it was experts at the level of Yuan Zhengfeng, Yan Di, Fang Zhun and Shi Tie, they might be able to have gains of their own.

Based on everyone's personal situation, their gains might vary from one to the next, and some would gain more, while some

would gain less. However, it was indisputably a treasure trove.

Bringing the entire stone pillar back, the only one who could actually truly refine and decipher it on a deeper level was in the end still Yan Zhaoge.

To Yuan Zhengfeng and the others, what held significance were the profundities within those patterns.

Therefore, while Yan Zhaoge would temporarily be remaining in Suzhou City for the stone pillar's second refinement, he recorded all of the patterns on it down, discreetly arranging for it to be secretly sent back to Broad Creed Mountain as soon as possible.

“Other than this matter, help me search meticulously for this thing in the Sand Region, seeing if you can find the second half,” After handing the crystal over to Ah Hu, Yan Zhaoge took out that half a jade coin, “Do not be too showy-perform the search in a low profile manner.”

Ah Hu received it, “Rest easy, Young Master. I know what to do.”

After Ah Hu left, Yan Zhaoge refocused his mind on the stone pillar before him, beginning to attempt to refine it a step further.

As Yan Zhaoge's fist intent merged with it, the scene of the Great Calamity that year seemed to appear before his eyes once more.

The heavens collapsing and the earth shattering, the scene

turning illusory, directly plummeting down from above the nine heavens. Yan Zhaoge knew full well that this scene was of the stone pillar's descent from the heavens. As though it was a lifeform with a memory of its own, his current visual perspective belonged to the stone pillar.

The stone pillar landed directly in the desert. At the beginning, the desert was totally ordinary. However, afterwards, the natural phenomena gradually changed, turning into the Great Western Desert that it was today.

And in this process, the stone pillar also gradually merged with the natural phenomena of the Great Western Desert, sometimes exposed on the outside, sometimes buried by the wind and the sand, not a trace of it visible.

Yan Zhaoge seemed to transform into this stone pillar as he experienced the ravages of time along with it.

Suddenly, the world before Yan Zhaoge's eyes lit up as an indistinct figure appeared before him!

HSSB 230: A Discovery That Causes Yan Zhaoge's Heart To Beat Wildly

The scenes in Yan Zhaoge's current field of vision did not truly exist, instead being from the 'memories' of the pillar of the divine palace.

Therefore, when he saw an indistinct figure appear in his field of vision, Yan Zhaoge could not help but take notice.

This meant that someone had discovered the stone pillar.

This person strolled over slowly in the midst of the Black Nightmare Storm, as though just walking along leisurely.

Seeing this, Yan Zhaoge knit his brows slightly, because distinguishing carefully, he discovered that this person had arrived precisely when the Black Nightmare Storms of the Great Western Desert were at their most ferocious.

Walking along so relaxedly and leisurely, this person's unfathomable strength caused a feeling of apprehension in others.

Especially when observing carefully, Yan Zhaoge discovered that he couldn't clearly see the person's appearance.

The other party seemed to have been enveloped by a clear layer of light, such that only the body's contours were visible. It was a

young woman, but her exact appearance and garb was a complete mystery.

This woman now came before Yan Zhaoge, or should it be said, before the stone pillar.

She gently reached out and stroked the stone pillar's exterior, sighing lightly as words seemed to resound within Yan Zhaoge's very heart, "Vast oceans to boundless fields, objects everlasting yet people faceless..."

Yan Zhaoge's pupils dilated abruptly, because listening to this person's words, he actually didn't feel like he was viewing a re-enactment of that time, but like this person was actually in the same era as him, right beside him as she spoke softly by his ear!

Hearing the person's words, carefully considering the meaning within, Yan Zhaoge's heart beat wildly.

Vast ocean to boundless fields, objects everlasting yet people faceless...

Stabilising his mind, Yan Zhaoge continued viewing the illusory scene.

That girl traced the patterns on the surface of the stone pillar, seemingly talking to herself, "Is the path that we will be walking the right one? When we die, will we be able to look our ancestors in the eye?"

She sighed lightly once more. She pressed down with her hand, not taking away the stone pillar, but pushing it such that it sank down even deeper, buried within the vast desert.

Gazing over carefully, Yan Zhaoge saw that the girl vaguely seemed to be wearing a crown on her head.

The scene very quickly vanished, but Yan Zhaoge's mind shuddered slightly once more.

“If I'm not wrong, that seemed like...the Extreme Yin Crown?” Yan Zhaoge's eyelids twitched as his expression turned rather strange.

While he had not personally seen it, Yan Zhaoge had viewed images of the Extreme Yin Crown quite a few times before.

The accessory on that girl's head, whilst seeming blurry and unreal, was clearly extremely similar in size to the Extreme Yin Crown.

Yan Zhaoge sucked in a deep breath as he awoke, breaking from the memories left behind in the stone pillar.

His expression was calm as innumerable thoughts flashed through his mind.

After a while, Yan Zhaoge recovered, his eyes squinting slightly as he raised his head and gazed over.

While the changes were slight, with Yan Zhaoge's current vision, he could accurately tell that the pillar of the divine palace before him was now a little shorter than before.

This meant that some results had already been seen in his second refinement of the pillar.

However, if he wanted to completely do what he had set out to do, it was not like the initial refinement earlier in the Great Western Desert, which could be done in a single leap.

This second refinement would require quite a bit of time and grinding to complete.

Yan Zhaoge reached out, pressing his palm on the surface of the stone pillar, his mind moving slightly as the stone pillar instantly became taller once more, resuming its former appearance, with no signs of anything out of the ordinary having happened.

However, it was indeed already different from how it was before. Accompanied by Yan Zhaoge's thoughts, the length and size of the stone pillar could already see some limited changes.

Accompanied by refining it further day by day, the extent to which the stone pillar could change in size would also increase unceasingly.

Yan Zhaoge looked at the pillar of the Divine Palace, not speaking for a long time.

In the days ahead, Yan Zhaoge remained stationed within Suzhou City. Other than for Elder Li's funeral, he remained cultivating, as well as refining the pillar of the Divine Palace.

Before the new Acting Elder of Suzhou got here, Broad Creed Mountain's martial practitioners in Suzhou would report to Yan Zhaoge on anything that happened.

However, everything here had long since been decided, and Yan Zhaoge was of no mind to mess around with the order of things. He just followed that which had been set in place earlier, peacefully going on with the status quo for this transition period.

Broad Creed Mountain losing an Acting Elder had already given its martial practitioners here bellies full of fire, and there was no one blind enough to provoke Broad Creed Mountain at this time.

After allocating the tasks that Yan Zhaoge had asked him to handle, Ah Hu returned to Yan Zhaoge's side.

Viewing the inscribed patterns on the stone pillar, Ah Hu also gradually quietened his heart, his gaze flickering as he seemed to have had some gains.

One fine day, the meditating Ah Hu suddenly opened his eyes, a

sharp light flickering within as that tangible spiritual light above his head shot straight up into the horizon, its momentum surging.

Sitting where he was, Yan Zhaoge watched this scene calmly.

The spiritual light above Ah Hu's head gradually receded into the crown of his head, the gaze within his eyes also beginning to retract.

Finally, the spiritual light above Ah Hu's head vanished, the sharp light within his eyes also gone without a trace.

Ah Hu got up and punched out with a fist, the resulting scene formed of his aura-qi and fist-intent virtually solidified into solid form.

The spiritual qi of his aura-qi could not be seen from the outside, inside being accumulated within the heaven and earth formed of his fist-intent, heavy and vibrant.

It was like a patch of fertile soil, able to nourish boundless life. As soon the seeds were planted, they could then be nurtured, next growing roots and birthing sprouts.

That forceful, heavy power on Ah Hu's entire body was yet also extraordinarily intelligent, having risen greatly from how it had been before!

He seemed to have switched his bones and been reborn, entering

a completely new heaven and earth.

The spiritual light above his head vanished, not having been intentionally kept hidden like before, but instead truly having vanished.

The spiritual light vanishing did not mean that he had weakened. On the contrary, Ah Hu had grown even stronger, because now, as every single one of his acupoints pulsed slightly, they seemed like they could communicate with the heavens and the earth, not just that one spiritual light above his head that was connected to the heavens any longer.

The sharp light within his eyes having been retracted, leaving it warm and smooth like jade, also shared this principle of the resuming of simplicity.

This was precisely the sign of a martial practitioner succeeding in their breakthrough from the Martial Scholar realm to the Martial Grandmaster realm!

Ah Hu leapt up from the ground, rushing before Yan Zhaoge upon which he broke out laughing, “Young Master, I’ve succeeded!”

Yan Zhaoge also laughed joyfully as he patted Ah Hu’s shoulder, “Heavenly Connection to Spirit Vessel, heavens and earth no longer the same-good!”

Like the Martial Scholar realm, the Martial Grandmaster realm also contained three major stages.

The ten levels of the Martial Grandmaster realm, counting from the bottom, consisted of the Spirit Vessel stage, the Essence Spirit stage and the Essence Talisman stage, each stage also individually divided into early, mid and late.

The final, peak stage of the Martial Grandmaster realm was the Transcending Mortality stage.

Like Ah Hu today, Heavenly Connection Martial Scholars, in breaking through that final bottleneck, stepping from Heavenly Connection into Spirit Vessel, would rise from a Martial Scholar to a Martial Grandmaster, achieving a cultivation base of the early Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster realm.

The spirituality of the aura-qi resuming simplicity, the heaven and earth of the fist-intent turning from illusory into real, spirit soil beginning to form.

When a spirit seed was condensed, increasing in strength as it grew within the spirit soil, one would have stepped into the mid Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster realm.

As Yan Zhaoge felt happy for Ah Hu, he had also long had an idea regarding his own upcoming cultivation progress, “From the late Xiantian stage to the Heavenly Connection stage is not hard, but if I want to quickly get from the Heavenly Connection stage to the Martial Grandmaster realm, some things will have to be prepared

beforehand.”

HSSB 231: Coming Over To Apologise

Cultivating from the late Xiantian stage to the Heavenly Connection stage as well as the supreme bottleneck that lay after, that between the Martial Scholar and Martial Grandmaster realms, the main thing that was required was comprehension, rather than being simply about grinding, slowly accumulating one's foundation.

Of course, some accumulation was still required, but it was definitely not something that could be achieved through pure bitter perseverance alone.

Especially for the breakthrough from the Heavenly Connection stage to the early Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster realm, whose difficulty surpassed that of any single breakthrough in the Martial Scholar realm before this.

The distance between the two realms truly lived up to its name of a heavenly gulf. Ever since ancient times, the number of martial practitioners who had been stuck at this bottleneck, wasting away the rest of their lives was far too many to count.

Let alone other powers, even many martial practitioners from Broad Creed Mountain and the other five Sacred Grounds remained stuck at this bottleneck, unable to improve any further.

In this current world, this bottleneck between the two realms was an important benchmark for judging an outstanding genius of the younger generation who possessed great potential.

It was hard to ascend to become a Martial Saint, but as long as one became a Martial Grandmaster, this was at least already enough to say that this young hero and genius was most likely not wasting his or her innate potential as well as talent.

People often said that only those geniuses who were able to convert their potential into true strength could truly be considered geniuses.

The benchmark here was actually usually agreed through tacit agreement as stepping into the Martial Grandmaster realm, or more accurately, breaking through the heavenly gulf and reaching the Martial Grandmaster realm whilst still young and fit.

And generally speaking, when a young genius became a Martial Grandmaster, the way they were looked at would also change, with them no longer seen by the world as younger generation disciples.

Someone like Yan Zhaoge who was already viewed like this before having reached the Heavenly Connection stage was someone that you could search for but never find, an exception amongst exceptions.

After all, the Martial Grandmaster experts outside of the six great Sacred Grounds could already more or less occupy a spot of their own.

With Ah Hu able to become a Martial Grandmaster, Yan Zhaoge was naturally happy for him.

As for Yan Zhaoge himself, he still had to perform a little more accumulation before breaking through from the late Xiantian stage to the Heavenly Connection stage.

To Yan Zhaoge, refining the pillar of the Divine Palace was not simply about viewing the images sealed within, or shrinking it as he liked.

Yan Zhaoge did not find the patterns on the pillar foreign, but it was rich in spirituality as well as mysteries, having a unique use of its own as he remained in actual possession of it.

As the one refining the pillar, he was the one benefiting the most from it.

As compared to Ah Hu, much, much more.

If he wanted to reach the Martial Grandmaster realm within a short period of time, Yan Zhaoge would have to use some special methods.

The crux of the matter was some things that he would have to prepare, which were currently rather rare and hard to seek out.

Yan Zhaoge was similarly confident of grasping it slowly himself, but it was just the current changes in the global situation were just too quick, with him having to increase his strength as soon as he could.

Especially after viewing the remnant memories of the pillar of the divine palace, whereupon many thoughts had surfaced in Yan Zhaoge's mind.

The reason he was interested in that half a jade coin was that the jade coin was an object of before the Great Calamity.

The information contained within its spirit formation might possibly lead him to some hidden realm.

Following the Great Calamity, many precious natural treasures had dwindled or even become extinct. If he could find a store of them in a hidden realm of before the Great Calamity, perhaps it might still contain something that he wanted.

That way, gathering them would be much more convenient, and he would also not have to wrack his brains on possible substitute materials.

Of course, this hidden realm could have been destroyed along with the Great Calamity, or might have been beat to the draw by others.

However, as compared to searching for virtually extinct things all around, this path was still rather more reliable.

In his spare time, Yan Zhaoge also remained up to date on things in Suzhou City and the entire Sand Region.

The new appointed Acting Elder of Suzhou arrived much later than Yan Zhaoge had thought he would, but when he learnt of whom the other party was, he too was a little surprised.

The news relayed over was that the new appointed Acting Elder of Suzhou City, was actually someone whom Yan Zhaoge could not possibly be more familiar with-Xu Fei!

The ‘Heavenly Roc’ Xu Fei, a disciple of Shi Tie, a leading figure of Broad Creed Mountain’s younger generation, just past the age of thirty, having stepped into the Martial Grandmaster realm following the Heavenly Connection Meet.

Hearing the news, Yan Zhaoge’s first thought was, “Has senior apprentice-brother Xu committed any error?”

Acting Elder positions were generally taken up by Martial Scholars. A Martial Grandmaster like Xu Fei who possessed an incalculable future being thrown into Suzhou City by the edge of the Sand Region as an Acting Elder-however he looked at it, it seemed like a waste of his talents, not befitting of them at all.

Xu Fei was still young. Also, just having become a Martial Grandmaster, his potential was still limitless, and it was precisely the time for him to be working hard in his cultivation.

Even for tempering, if they wanted to place him outside, they should have waited for his cultivation to have improved a bit more before directly giving him the position of a Principal Elder. Being

an Acting Elder was just an impossible thing.

Yan Zhaoge was momentarily sent into a daze upon hearing the news, but he very quickly recovered.

“Is it because of the matter of the Decimating Abyss and Black Nightmare Mountain that I reported earlier?” Yan Zhaoge narrowed his eyes slightly, “Back at the clan, Grand Master, father, eldest apprentice-uncle and them all believe that the Decimating Abyss will be acting in the Wind Domain soon?”

Ah Hu scratched his head, “I fear it must be so.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded-it could be explained this way then. Xu Fei’s arrival was only to temporarily take up the position of Suzhou’s Acting Elder, as special times called for special measures.

Having just tried to assassinate Yan Zhaoge by the border of the Sand Region earlier, if the Decimating Abyss and Black Nightmare Mountain still wanted to create trouble, Suzhou would be the frontline of their actions.

Other than in some extreme few unique circumstances, like that with Yan Zhaoge, if a Martial Scholar were to take up the position of Suzhou’s Acting Elder, it would seem a little flimsy.

Viewed in that light, sending over a powerful figure was an understandable decision.

Yan Zhaoge was also here, but his situation was too special, his authority shockingly at the level of a First Seat Elder. Placing him in Suzhou would make things a little awkward for the Principal Elder of the Howling Wind Sword Sect.

Therefore, the clan had decided to let Yan Zhaoge continue moving freely.

Coming over to Suzhou, Xu Fei had deep ties with Yan Zhaoge, also having good coordination with him.

Sitting on a chair, Yan Zhaoge gently tapped on its armrest, “The Decimating Abyss had been keeping extremely low key before this, only gradually becoming more and more active following that incident in the Sealing Dragon Abyss. Now, the frequency of its activities has been getting higher and higher.”

“The situation over at the Earth Domain still cannot be said to have been completely resolved, and following the incident at Clear Concealed Lake, they have made plans to act in the Wind Domain once more.”

Yan Zhaoge’s fingers suddenly ceased their tapping, “Are there any special reasons for this? Could it be related to the Nine Underworlds over on the other side?”

Getting up, Yan Zhaoge gradually began frowning, “Causing wave after wave of trouble like this, whilst creating trouble for us, they have also been unceasingly depleting their own strength. Before, we were in the open while they were in the dark, with

them therefore possessive shocking destructive power. Currently, gradually coming out on the surface, their greatest advantage is actually gradually disappearing.”

As Yan Zhaoge pondered, Ah Hu said from the side, “Right, Young Master. Someone wants to see you.”

“Oh, who is it?” Yan Zhaoge asked, as Ah Hu replied with a smacking of his lips, “It’s the head of the Lian Family of that Lian Cheng and Lian Ying of earlier, come here to express his apologies.”

HSSB 232: Apology Gift Or Present?

“Head of the Lian Family?” Yan Zhaoge raised his brows slightly, and Ah Hu nodded in reply, “Yes, and that Lian Cheng was brought along as well.”

Yan Zhaoge thought for a moment, his face then turning a little strange, “They should have other motives.”

In the Great Western Desert, Lian Ying of the Lian Family had been instigated by martial practitioners of Black Nightmare Mountain to create a White Dragon Dread, attempting to do harm to Yan Zhaoge and the others.

Afterwards, Yan Zhaoge had not thought too much about this. After all, the primary culprit Yao Shan had already landed in his hands, and Lian Ying himself was already dead.

As Lian Ying’s words at that time might have negatively influenced Jun Luo’s reputation, as per Yan Zhaoge’s words, the Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners had not spread word of what exactly had happened.

However, having nearly been harmed by Lian Ying with the White Dragon Dread, they naturally wouldn’t have any good feelings towards him.

Towards martial practitioners of the Lian Family, they definitely wouldn’t give them any good face.

In the Wind Domain, if it was said that they would still have to fight a little with the Sacred Sun Clan by the border of the Gan Region, with the Sand Region the longtime possession of Broad Creed Mountain, their control here was more or less the same as in the Five Regions of the Heaven Domain.

If Broad Creed Mountain lightly stomped its foot, it would be more than enough for the Sand Region to tremble.

Although it was just the dissatisfaction of the martial practitioners of Broad Creed Mountain stationed here in Suzhou City, the news very quickly spread back to the ancestral ground of the Lian Family, the Lian Family Fortress.

Having separated from Yan Zhaoge and the others in Suzhou City, not even having returned to the Lian Family Fortress, Lian Cheng had already been blocked by other members of his Family, and then swiftly brought back at rocket speed.

After hearing Lian Cheng's narration, the members of the Lian Family all fell into a deep silence.

From a certain angle, it was Yao Shan who had wanted to assassinate Yan Zhaoge, therefore dragging Lian Ying in, with Lian Ying just an innocent person implicated by this incident. If not for Yao Shan's assassination plan, Lian Ying would not have done such a deed, even having died.

However, from the other side, if Lian Ying himself had not been

problematic, how would he have been made use of by Yao Shan? Why could Lian Ying become a dagger in Yao Shan's hands and therefore an accomplice, while Jun Luo and Lian Cheng had not become Yao Shan's chess pieces?

If one were to talk about innocence, Jun Luo and Lian Cheng were far more innocent than Lian Ying.

Especially when Yan Zhaoge's group had even saved the three of them from a Black Nightmare Storm, with Lian Ying actually requiting kindness with enmity.

The Lord of the Lian Family Fortress made a swift and prompt decision, deciding to head to Suzhou City and meet with Yan Zhaoge to express his apologies as soon as he could.

In comparison to the Lian Family Fortress, the Howling Wind Sword Sect was already a mighty entity, and the distance between the Howling Wind Sword Sect and Broad Creed Mountain was only greater.

Let alone the fact that reason didn't lie on the side of the Lian Family; even if it did, it also might not mean anything.

With the lofty position of the six great Sacred Grounds, it had never been as simple as merely speaking.

By comparison, Broad Creed Mountain and Turbid Wave Pavilion could be considered extremely easy to get along with. If it were the

Sacred Sun Clan, the Heavenly Thunder Hall, Infinite Boundless Mountain or Jade Sea City, even if reason lay on their side, the opposite might be made out to be true.

Moreover, if not for Yan Zhaoge, Jun Luo would have died in Lian Ying's hands. Other than Broad Creed Mountain's side, the Lian Family also had to account for things to Elder Jun of the Howling Wind Sword Sect.

This caused the Lian Family Head to have the feeling of sitting in his home, with the feeling of disasters flying overhead everywhere, full of bitterness, yet having nowhere to express it.

But very quickly, he soon felt that if he acted appropriately, he might be able to turn danger into opportunity. Thus, he immediately brought Lian Cheng along, hurrying over to Suzhou City.

Yan Zhaoge did not refuse him, asking Ah Hu to invite him in.

Very quickly, he saw a rather authoritative-looking middle-aged man, bringing along a weak looking Lian Cheng, appear before his eyes.

“Before the Broad Creed Young Master, Lian Chongyi of the Lian Family Fortress pays his respects,” that middle-aged man first cupped his fists in greeting.

Smiling, Yan Zhaoge returned the greeting, “Fortress Lord Lian

is polite.”

Lian Chongyi was the current strongest expert of the Lian Family, at the second level of the Martial Grandmaster realm, in the mid Spirit Vessel stage, already having condensed a spirit seed.

Arriving personally was a great show of his sincerity, but before Yan Zhaoge, he did not dare to be full of himself.

Let alone him, even if it was the Chief of the Howling Wind Sword Sect meeting Yan Zhaoge now, he could also not treat him in a casual manner.

Looking at Lian Chongyi, Yan Zhaoge nodded slightly.

In the current Extremities World, the martial practitioners of the six great Sacred Grounds were used to differentiating the various other powers as first-rate, second-rate, third-rate and even unranked.

Usually, those with Essence Spirit Martial Grandmasters were termed as first-rate powers, those with Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmasters were termed as second-rate powers, while those with Martial Scholars but no Martial Grandmasters were known as third-rate powers.

As for unranked powers, the martial practitioners of the six great Sacred Grounds generally didn't keep them on their mind. An example was the Ye Family in which Ye Jing had been born.

Of course, there were the most of these powers, with them being as common as hairs on a cow as they populated every single corner of this world.

While powers like the Eastern Tang Kingdom and the Howling Wind Sword Sect were considered first-rate powers, with the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom Zhao Shicheng at the fifth level of the Martial Grandmaster realm, a mid Essence Spirit stage expert, and the Chief of the Howling Wind Sword Sect at the sixth level of the Martial Grandmaster realm, an expert of the late Essence Spirit stage.

Those like the Lian Family Fortress, who had the mid Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster Lian Chongyi, were considered second-rate powers.

Generally speaking, the Acting Elders of Broad Creed Mountain stationed at second-rate powers did not have to be Martial Grandmasters. Broad Creed Mountain's brand was already sufficient to protect their interests.

While Principal Elders that were stationed were usually decided by the strength of the various first-rate powers there.

For example, the Principal Elder of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Yan Xu, as the First Seat Elder of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, had been at the fourth level of the Martial Grandmaster realm, with an early Essence Spirit stage cultivation base.

If Yan Xu had not been beaten to the point of near death by Shi Tie back then, Yan Zhaoge would not have been able to take him down so easily.

And the current First Seat Elder of the Howling Wind Sword Sect, Broad Creed Mountain's Principal Elder there was at the fifth level of the Martial Grandmaster realm, with a mid Essence Spirit stage cultivation base.

In respect for the autonomy of the first-rate powers, the Principal Elders stationed by Broad Creed Mountain at their lands would always have a slightly lower cultivation base than their strongest expert.

But because of Broad Creed Mountain's advantage in its direct lineage martial arts, its Principal Elders were actually not at much of a disadvantage, able to sufficiently secure Broad Creed Mountain's interests.

Of course, this referred only to the cultivation bases of individuals, not considering the advantages of the first-rate powers where they were based. The first-rate powers still usually held the initiative there.

However, in every region, Broad Creed Mountain had First Seat Elders specifically sitting over the area. Other than conflicts in which other Sacred Grounds crossed the border and a conflict arose, it also guaranteed that as long as Broad Creed Mountain was willing, they would be able to suppress any uprisings there.

However, whether it was the First Seat Elder of the East Heaven Region, Elder Qin, or the First Seat Elder of the Wind Domain's Sand Region, they were all Martial Grandmaster experts of the Essence Talisman stage.

Yan Zhaoge currently only had the authority of a First Seat Elder, while the official First Seat Elders of Broad Creed Mountain at least had cultivation bases of the seventh level of the Martial Grandmaster realm, as Martial Grandmaster experts of the Essence Talisman stage.

Lian Chongyi said, "It was unfortunate for my family, having produced such an unfilial descendant, bringing trouble to Young Master Yan and other fellow practitioners of Broad Creed Mountain. This Lian truly feels plagued by this, therefore having specifically come here bearing gifts of apology, hoping that you will forgive us."

Saying thus, he retrieved an item, placing it before Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge understood with a single glance, "Indeed, it's not for gifts of apology-he's come bearing presents."

HSSB 233: This Bro Is A Good Guy

Lian Chongyi's so-called apology gift was some jade-green substance stored inside a container.

The substance was thick, resembling an emerald as it reflected Yan Zhaoge's features.

Seeing it, Yan Zhaoge recognised it as Jade Spring Condensed Essence.

Within the territory controlled by the Lian Family Fortress, there was a Jade Sand Spring, famed for its spring water that rather beneficial to martial practitioners.

Broad Creed Mountain had a Jade Spring Acting Elder stationed there, and was given a certain amount of the spring water every year.

However, as compared to the Jade Sand Spring Water, the Jade Spring Condensed Essence produced by the spring was far more valuable.

It was only that the Jade Spring Condensed Essence was extremely rare. Whether it was the Lian Family Fortress or Broad Creed Mountain, they could only get a bit of it every year. Other than them, only the Howling Wind Sword Sect still had a share. Other powers wouldn't dare to even think about it.

While the Jade Spring Condensed Essence Lian Chongyi was intending to give Yan Zhaoge now seemed only like a cup's worth, it was actually equivalent to a whole year's worth of production from the spring!

In other words, the amount of Jade Spring Condensed Essence that the entire Broad Creed Mountain gained every year was also less than the amount before Yan Zhaoge now.

Naturally, this wasn't due to the Lian Family Fortress having concealed and falsified the amount of Jade Spring Condensed Essence produced by the spring. Instead, this gift had been painfully accumulated by them over the years. Just this bit of Jade Spring Condensed Essence-it wouldn't be wrong to say that its value rivalled a city's.

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, Lian Chongyi smiled, "Because this matter happened so suddenly, and I truly rushed over here hurriedly, I could only prepare this meagre gift. Young Master Yan is used to seeing various strange and unique treasures; please accept its unworthiness. Returning this time, this Lian will make preparations once more, very quickly sending them over to Young Master Yan."

If the gift Jade Spring Condensed Essence could be seen as the Lian Family Fortress expressing sincerity in their apology, the latter part of Lian Chongyi's words undeniably revealed his true intentions.

While he was coming to express his apologies, he also hoped to use this as a chance to strike up a connection with Yan Zhaoge.

While Yan Zhaoge might not be staying in the Sand Region for too long, if news of the Lian Family Fortress being on friendly relations with the Broad Creed Young Master spread, it would already be greatly beneficial to the Lian Family.

Other than that, Yan Zhaoge also gleaned some other things from his words.

“Young Master, the only good things the Lian Family have are the Jade Spring Condensed Essence and the Jade Sand Spring Water. He wants to prepare a substantial gift once more-what can he prepare?” Ah Hu silently sent Yan Zhaoge a sound transmission via aura-qi from the side, “Can he still obtain even more Jade Spring Condensed Essence? But couldn’t he have brought it all in one go then?”

Yan Zhaoge answered leisurely, “The Lian Family does not have other good things left, but some people do ah. Do you still remember the information I asked you to find before we came to the Sand Region?”

Ah Hu realised, “Elder Hong of the Howling Wind Sword Sect?”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “That’s right.”

The current Howling Wind Sword Sect was also nearing the period of leadership succession. The old Chief, due to his great age, had recently decided to pass down his position to the next generation.

Of the experts of the next generation of the Howling Wind Sword Sect, the most outstanding person was actually Yan Di's old friend, Jun Luo's father Elder Jun.

His cultivation base was the highest, and at the same time he was extremely good friends with Yan Di.

It was only that Elder Jun had no wish to succeed the position, having openly said long ago that he would not do so. Therefore, the competition had spread between two other Elders.

An Elder Hong, and an Elder Bai. The two were similarly matched, leaving it hard for the old Chief to make a choice.

As the two looked for backers, the most important backer was undoubtedly Broad Creed Mountain.

As Yan Zhaoge knew, on this matter, whether it was Broad Creed Mountain's First Seat Elder in the Sand Region or Principal Elder at the Howling Wind Sword Sect, both maintained a neutral stance.

This was because it wasn't as complicated a situation as in the Eastern Tang previously-both Elder Hong and Elder Bai were supporters of Broad Creed Mountain.

Whether it was cultivation base or ability to handle matters, it was hard to find a clear victor of the two. Therefore, Broad Creed

Mountain had also maintained neutrality here.

To Broad Creed Mountain, whoever gained control of the Howling Wind Sword Sect was not important. As long as he leaned towards Broad Creed Mountain, not allowing any other powers to take root in their territory, that would be fine.

Otherwise, Broad Creed Mountain wouldn't interfere in the internal affairs of its subordinate powers lightly.

And Elder Hong and Elder Bai also didn't dare to mess around too much. Otherwise, it would be equivalent to forcing Elder Jun out to clean up the mess for them.

In such a situation, the Yan Zhaoge who suddenly came to the Sand Region and the territory of the Howling Wind Sword Sect instantly caused the eyes of both sides to light up.

Earlier, Yan Zhaoge had not stayed for too long, very quickly heading over to the Great Western Desert, with Elder Hong and Elder Bai not having any time to meet with him properly.

Afterwards, with the assassination case, a tense air had enveloped the entire Sand Region, as the internal conflict of the Howling Wind Sword Sect had also temporarily eased.

The Lian Family Fortress was subordinate to the Howling Wind Sword Sect, being a second-rate power close to Elder Hong. Coming over this time, other than apologising for his family,

finding a way to quell the possibly existing anger within the hearts of Yan Zhaoge and the other Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners, he actually also had the intention of helping Elder Hong to pave a path.

Because of his father, out of the entire Howling Wind Sword Sect, Yan Zhaoge was naturally most familiar with Elder Jun.

However, with Elder Jun not getting himself involved in the matter, Yan Zhaoge did not care about the competition between Elder Hong and Elder Bai for the successor's position.

On this matter, Yan Zhaoge held the same attitude as the Sand Region's First Seat Elder and others.

Elder Hong and Lian Chongyi were now attempting to make use of this opportunity to get in contact with Yan Zhaoge, for if Yan Zhaoge's attitude changed, it might possibly change the situation entirely!

Not mentioning the Yan Di behind him, even Yan Zhaoge himself was incomparable to normal people in the weight of his words.

Let alone the Principal Elder of the Howling Wind Sword Sect, even the First Seat Elder of the Sand Region would give Yan Zhaoge face should he choose to weigh in on this matter.

Not just on Yan Zhaoge's side, with Lian Ying having nearly killed Jun Luo, on Elder Jun's side, Lian Chongyi would also take

the initiative to express his apologies there, trying to change an unbeneficial situation into a beneficial one.

Elder Jun himself was not a competitor, and also usually maintained a neutral stance. Whether he and Elder Hong successfully drew Elder Jun over this time or he was instead enraged at Elder Hong due to his daughter facing danger, they both had the possibility of changing the delicate balance of this situation, causing Lian Chongyi to have to take great care in it.

“So that’s to say...” Ah Hu blinked, “He’s now trying to curry favour with and bribe Young Master?”

Yan Zhaoge drew back the corners of his lips, “Oh...you can say that.”

Ah Hu asked, “Then why doesn’t he just directly bribe the First Seat Elder of the Sand Region and the Principal Elder of the Howling Wind Sword Sect? After all, they are the ones always stationed here. Young Master is just passing by and staying temporarily.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “Because Elder Bai would also do so, not standing there just watching his competitor go to great pains while not doing anything himself. Exchanging moves, they would do so directly till both of them lost out.”

“I came very suddenly, making it not difficult for the elders to both to come over directly. That would really not look nice at all. Therefore, they have been looking for a chance to seize the

initiative.”

“Haven’t Elder Hong and the Lian Family found this reason to come over now?”

Yan Zhaoge sent a sound transmission to Ah Hu, “I predict that Elder Bai has received the news, and his people are already on their way here to test the waters. Along with Lian Chongyi, it is just a matter of coming before and coming later.”

Ah Hu gave a simple and honest smile, “Young Master, this is your chance to strike it rich ah.”

Hearing these words, Yan Zhaoge didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. It was the first time that this kind of problem had surfaced along with his gradual increase in position.

Frustration ah, this bro is a good guy-aren’t they specifically enticing me to make a mistake?

HSSB 234: Continuing To Give Presents, Each Revealing Their Formidability

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, Lian Chongyi actually felt a little uneasy within his heart.

By common logic, coming personally to apologise with gifts to a Martial Scholar as a Martial Grandmaster was a great show of his sincerity, and the other party would most likely give him face and accept the gift.

Otherwise, it would be humiliating for him as a Martial Grandmaster, with an irreconcilable enmity springing up between the two.

But Yan Zhaoge was far from an ordinary Martial Scholar. Even if he shut the door in Lian Chongyi's face, Lian Chongyi would only be able to take it smiling bitterly.

Not only could he not think of vengeance, Lian Chongyi would even have to think of a way to find someone to speak for him, alleviating the tensions between the two.

Of course, by the rumours Lian Chongyi had heard, while Yan Zhaoge was rather high profile and arrogant, he was not hard to get along with most of the time, and would most likely not be so brutal.

However, Lian Chongyi still lacked confidence, because his

motives were already impure.

While he was here to personally apologise, he also held some other intentions.

If he could, Lian Chongyi would not want to rush things like this. It would be best if he made another trip later on, naturally bringing his plans to completion.

But firstly, he didn't know when Yan Zhaoge would leave the Sand Region, and secondly, Elder Bai's side would react immediately, also sending people over. If Lian Chongyi and Elder Hong wanted to seize the initiative, they had to seize it firmly, fighting for that difference in timing.

Therefore, they had no choice but to take the risk of Yan Zhaoge being unhappy with them instead.

Glancing at Lian Chongyi, Yan Zhaoge smiled mildly, "Fortress Lord Lian is polite. While your family's Lian Ying was wrong, it fortunately did not lead to an unsalvageable result. Actually, he was also used by others, and has already paid with his life. Therefore, I do not intend to pursue the matter further."

"If any antagonistic words of my clan's martial practitioners have made their way into Fortress Lord Lian's ears, please take it as them being too emotional and do not take it to heart. I will warn them later."

Lian Chongyi hurriedly denied it being so, as Yan Zhaoge's gaze shifted to that container of Jade Spring Condensed Essence, "As for this Jade Spring Condensed Essence..."

"Please accept it, Young Master Yan," Lian Chongyi immediately said, "Lian Ying having done wrong, at the end of the day, it must still be attributed to my lack of teachings. I truly cannot rest well with that."

Yan Zhaoge looked at him for a while, then smiled slightly, "Our clan's Acting Elder in Suzhou, Elder Li, went along with me to the Great Western Desert, and unfortunately perished there. Elder Li also had credit in saving Luo Luo, Lian Cheng and Lian Ying. He has family remaining, and I will keep this Jade Spring Condensed Essence on their behalf."

Hearing his words, Lian Chongyi nodded repeatedly, "That is for the best; this Lian also feels deep sadness for your clan's Elder Li having perished."

Whatever reason Yan Zhaoge did so under, it was fine as long as he accepted it.

Lian Chongyi having completed most of his motive in coming here, he instantly relaxed greatly. Still, what caused him to smile bitterly was that Yan Zhaoge never accepted Elder Hong's intentions.

With regard to this, Lian Chongyi naturally couldn't mention it. Otherwise, it might really lead to the opposite effect, causing Yan

Zhaoge to feel put off.

He swivelled his head to look at the silent Lian Cheng by the side, “Lian Cheng being able to return safely from the Great Western Desert this time, it is also thanks to Young Master Yan. Presumptuously coming here this time, other than to express our apologies, it is also to express our thanks.”

Lian Cheng hurriedly bowed to Yan Zhaoge, “Thank you Young Master Yan for saving my life.”

Seeing this scene, Ah Hu drew back the corners of his lips, not saying anything.

While Lian Cheng was an acquaintance of Jun Luo’s from before, Jun Luo was very friendly towards everyone. Lian Cheng and the deceased Lian Ying were not necessarily outstanding at all.

Usually, Lian Chongyi might not even spare a glance for Lian Cheng. Today, it was because Lian Cheng had a little destiny with Yan Zhaoge, having faced danger alongside his Young Master that Lian Chongyi had brought him. Perhaps he would receive more attention by the head of his Family in the future.

Chance encounters were also a part of destiny. Ascending to the heavens in a single step was of course impossible, but they could still turn out to be a life-changing opportunity.

Seeing this, Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly, “Lian Cheng is not bad at

all, at least being someone who places great weight on the ties between people. However, in this world of martial practitioners, valuable treasures are weak and easily destroyed, while hot-bloodedness and resilience are better for living the splendiness of life.”

“Our meeting was short but my words deep-I may be a bit presumptuous here. Still, I have no intention of interfering with your life. You should decide your own path for yourself.”

Looking at Lian Cheng, some delight flashed in Lian Chongyi’s eyes, as Lian Cheng himself was dazed for a bit before he recovered, bowing to Yan Zhaoge once more, “Thank you for your advice, Young Master Yan; I...I also know that my personality is too weak...”

Smiling, Yan Zhaoge waved his hands, no longer speaking.

Seeing that Yan Zhaoge had the intention of ending things, Lian Chongyi discerningly took his leave.

Leaving Yan Zhaoge’s place, Lian Chongyi sighed. He had at least not made a wasted trip.

As for Elder Hong, he could not do anything about it. From the start, he had also not carried too great a hope.

Afterwards came Elder Jun and Jun Luo. With Jun Luo nearly having died at Lian Ying’s hands, he also had to account for things

to Elder Jun.

If Elder Jun pursued the matter, perhaps even Yan Zhaoge would blow things up. At the end of the day, the person with whom Yan Zhaoge was the most familiar within the Howling Wind Sword Sect was still Elder Jun.

As Lian Chongyi pondered, he glanced thoughtfully at the Lian Cheng following behind him.

As they emerged from Yan Zhaoge's dwelling, they met an old man, currently heading this way under the lead of a Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioner.

As the two sides met, Lian Chongyi's gaze instantly hardened, "Oh, Manor Lord Huang?"

Lian Chongyi was extremely familiar with the newcomer. He was the Manor Lord of another second-rate power subordinate to the Howling Wind Sword Sect, the Yellow Wind Mountain Manor.

It was just that in contrast to the Lian Family Fortress being subordinate to Elder Hong, the Yellow Wind Mountain Manor was a supporter of Elder Bai.

Seeing Lian Chongyi, Manor Lord Huang's gaze similarly flickered, as he began laughing, "Fortress Lord Lian, long time no see. Have you been well?"

Lian Chongyi smiled, saying, “It has indeed been a long time. Manor Lord Huang is tough and healthy as always, yet I wonder what has brought you thousands of kilometres over to this Suzhou City?”

Manor Lord Huang sighed, “This old man can be considered old acquaintances with Broad Creed Mountain’s Elder Li of Suzhou City. Him having met harm, this old man just had to rush over to commemorate him.”

“This old man has long heard of the famed Broad Creed Young Master, and naturally wanted to personally witness the flair of the dragon amongst dragons in the flesh.”

While saying this, he paid attention to Lian Chongyi’s expression, now seeing a smile appear on his face, “This Lian has just seen Young Master Yan, and he is indeed remarkable, not someone to whom others can compare, especially with his discerning eyes, and his extraordinary insight.”

Hearing his words, Manor Lord Huang squinted for a moment before nodding, “Oh, this old man also thinks that it should be so.”

Lian Chongyi was naturally intentionally adding pressure to the other party, attempting to mislead him.

However, seeing that Manor Lord Huang, whilst affected, still looked full of confidence, Lian Chongyi couldn’t help but feel slightly uncomfortable within his heart.

He did not reveal anything outwardly, just nodding slightly to Manor Lord Huang, “With this, this Lian takes my leave. If Manor Lord Huang has time, why not pay my Lian Family Fortress a visit.”

Manor Lord Huang said politely, “Definitely, definitely. My Yellow Wind Mountain Manor also welcomes Fortress Lord Lian as a visitor at any time.”

The two brushed past each other. Turning back, seeing Manor Lord Huang walking towards Yan Zhaoge’s dwelling, Lian Chongyi momentarily felt flooded with emotions.

Today was truly each revealing their formidability, seeing who could move that great Buddha inside.

Thinking how that great Buddha was still only a Martial Scholar, still only around twenty years of age, Lian Chongyi could only feel that this world was truly an unpredictable one.

HSSB 235: One Finishes Singing And The Other Ascends The Stage

Seeing that it was indeed the Manor Lord of the Yellow Wind Mountain Manor who arrived directly after Lian Chongyi, the feeling of not knowing whether to laugh or to cry within Yan Zhaoge's heart grew.

Regarding their behaviour of 'one finishes singing and the other ascends the stage', Yan Zhaoge felt that it was very good, very powerful.

Grabbing hold of the chance and advancing aggressively, trying for the support that they could get, unceasingly increasing the chips they had on hand.

Yan Zhaoge was not averse to this kind of thing. Whether it was Elder Bai or Elder Hong, he didn't lean towards either of them. Therefore, since he saw one of their representatives, he naturally had to give the other side an equal chance.

Otherwise, news would spread that Yan Zhaoge had seen Lian Chongyi but shut the door in Manor Lord Huang's face, and it would be equivalent to saying that he supported Elder Hong.

Manor Lord Huang first reminisced about the dead Elder Li along with Yan Zhaoge, before it gradually switched to casual conversation.

After conversing for a bit, Manor Lord Huang did not dare to delay things any longer, lest he annoyed Yan Zhaoge by taking up too much of his time.

He took out a brocade box, saying smilingly, "I've heard that Young Master Yan likes ancient objects, and is also knowledgeable on various ancient characters. Not long ago, this old man obtained a treasure of times long past, and found himself unable to glean anything from it. I would like Young Master Yan to take a look at it."

Seeing him open the brocade box, Yan Zhaoge was involuntarily stunned slightly.

Within the brocade box sat half of a jade coin, in a semi-circular form with ancient patterns on its surface.

It was clearly the other half of the jade coin that Yan Zhaoge had instructed Ah Hu to find earlier.

After obtaining that half jade coin from the remnant of Black Nightmare Mountain, Yao Shan, because the jade coin looked to be rather newly broken, he had deduced that its other half was most likely still in the Sand Region.

He had not thought that it would be wearing out iron shoes on an unsuccessful search, yet finally obtaining it without any effort.

Yan Zhaoge appraised Manor Lord Huang, who was giving him a

bit of an anticipatory look.

He secretly exchanged glances with Ah Hu, who shook his head slightly, indicating that he had kept the matter in the utmost secrecy, whilst having been searching for the missing half of the jade coin, not having leaked news of such.

At the very least, the news should not have spread to Manor Lord Huang.

Manor Lord Huang indeed did not know that Yan Zhaoge had the other half of the jade coin, but he had found someone to appraise it and confirmed that this half jade coin he had was extremely ancient, and also genuine, definitely not being an imitation of the current era.

Therefore, Manor Lord Huang's great confidence in facing Lian Chongyi had not been unfounded, with him feeling that he had good reason for this. By going by what Yan Zhaoge liked, his present would mostly likely be able to catch Yan Zhaoge's eye.

Stroking the jade coin, Yan Zhaoge smiled after a while, "It is indeed an ancient artifact, and I too cannot immediately tell its background."

"However, I have some thoughts on it. If Manor Lord Huang does not mind, can I keep it for a time, analysing and researching into it?"

A smile instantly appeared on Manor Lord Huang's face, "Naturally. Only with Young Master Yan here will this object not be like a pearl being obscured by dust."

He thus accepted it. While Manor Lord Huang felt a little regretful at Yan Zhaoge not following on his attempts to bring the conversation topic over to Elder Bai, on the whole, he still left in a rather good mood.

After sending Manor Lord Huang away, Yan Zhaoge tapped lightly on the table as he said, "Ah Hu, of my private property, choose some things as return gifts for them."

He tapped on the brocade box which contained the half jade coin, "This thing's value is a little greater, because I have a liking for ancient artifacts."

Ah Hu blinked, "Young Master, they are both not of Broad Creed Mountain, and came on their own initiative to pay their respects to you, rather than you blackmailing or extorting from them or anything. You didn't actually take anything-it'll be fine even if the news gets back to the clan."

"One was being a smart aleck, using the expressing of apologies as an excuse, with a sign of selling the heads of lambs but actually selling the meat of dogs, while the other used the name of commemorating Elder Li, leaving me with good feelings towards neither of them at all," Yan Zhaoge shook his head, "It would be fine if it were just things like the Jade Spring Condensed Essence; I might truly first eat one side then the other, wiping them all clean."

“However, this half jade coin just happened to be precisely the thing I’d been looking for. If he had not given it to me, we would still have had to spend time searching for it. Therefore, send him a return gift.”

Yan Zhaoge waved his hands, “If I just send a return gift to one side, the outside world would still think that I had chosen a side of the two. Therefore, send a return gift to both sides.”

“For the matter of the Howling Wind Sword Sect, unless Uncle Jun expresses a stance, we will not participate in it.”

Ah Hu gave a simple and honest laugh, “Yes, Young Master.”

Yan Zhaoge took out that half jade coin of his, putting it back together with its other half in the brocade box.

As the two half jade coins were pieced together, they merged, as a complete jade coin instantly reappeared, flickering with a faint lustre.

Yan Zhaoge traced the patterns on the exterior of the jade coin, slowly projecting the circulation of its spirit formation within his heart.

Because the jade coin had been shattered, the spirit formation inscribed on it had become incomplete. While the spirit patterns had now been repaired completely, for the circulation of spiritual

qi within to recover completely, Yan Zhaoge still needed time to guide its recovery.

Day after day passed, as Broad Creed Mountain's new Acting Elder in Suzhou, Xi Fei, finally arrived.

Yan Zhaoge, Feng Yunsheng and Ah Hu went to meet him together, as they saw a big, tall man stride vigorously over. It was precisely the 'Heavenly Roc' Xu Fei.

Xu Fei strode over in huge steps to Yan Zhaoge, punching his shoulder a little, laughing heartily, "I have come to assist you this time."

Yan Zhaoge also laughed, "Sending you to Suzhou as an Acting Elder is really a waste of your talents."

Removing the wineskin at his waist, Xu Fei chugged a huge mouthful of wine, before wiping his mouth completely unconcernedly, "The clan orders, I naturally follow. Grand Master and Master definitely have their considerations."

"I have also seen your report given to the clan. The Decimating Abyss entangled with Black Nightmare Mountain is not a small matter indeed. It definitely cannot be taken lightly."

Xu Fei handed the wineskin to Yan Zhaoge, who also raised his head and drank a mouthful of wine before he said, "Speaking of it, I might have to leave after a while. At that time, senior apprentice-

brother Xu will have to keep a little more vigilant.”

“Just leave it to me,” Xu Fei answered.

He swivelled his head to look at Feng Yunsheng, smiling, “Junior apprentice-sister Feng? This is still our first meeting; nice to meet you.”

Feng Yunsheng also smiled, “I have long heard of senior apprentice-brother Xu’s famed name.”

Xu Fei smiled, sending a sidelong glance at Yan Zhaoge, “Famed drunkard?”

Feng Yunsheng blinked, also looking towards Yan Zhaoge like she was smiling whilst also not.

Yan Zhaoge rolled his eyes, telling Feng Yunsheng, “Just sell me out already!”

Xu Fei laughed, patting his hand, “You still need to be sold? Just stop, is the truth anyways.”

As they talked and laughed, they accompanied with Xu Fei for the handover of duties.

While Xu Fei seemed like a rough person, he was actually meticulous on the inside, being someone who was willing to keep

his feet firmly on the ground and put in effort.

He was outstanding in terms of talent, his strength exemplary, and in terms of the handling of everyday matters in outside lands, he was also stable and dependable, similarly being a good hand at it.

Succeeding the position as the Acting Elder of Suzhou, he very quickly got into the role, as the First Seat Elder of the Sand Region and the Principal Elder of the Howling Wind Sword Sect were both full of praises for him afterwards.

After Xu Fei had assumed his position, Yan Zhaoge focused his attention back on that complete, recovered jade coin.

One day, sitting in the meditative position, on the ground before Yan Zhaoge, a jade coin emitted light, as a complete spirit formation, circulating silently, was projected in mid-air.

Looking over carefully, Yan Zhaoge saw that the centre of that spirit formation resembled a door.

HSSB 236: Meeting Lin Zhou Once More

Looking at that illusory door at the centre of the spirit formation, Yan Zhaoge nodded with satisfaction.

His deduction on the spirit formation based on the patterns of the jade coin earlier had been accurate. This spirit formation indeed led to some secret realm.

Standing by Yan Zhaoge's side, Ah Hu asked curiously, "Young Master, such a tiny jade coin can actually contain the secrets of space, directly leading people to a foreign space?"

Yan Zhaoge sighed, "In the world before the Great Calamity, the martial dao flourished greatly, with many concepts having been analysed to a very profound stage."

"Therefore, some profundities were also simplified, and able to be used in ordinary life. While the average person would be unable to understand the underlying concepts, they would still be able to use some tools."

Yan Zhaoge stood up, "Actually, the Shadow Shrinking Pouch was a pretty common object before the Great Calamity."

Saying thus, Yan Zhaoge walked to the other side. There, the massive pillar of the Divine Palace still stood, seemingly not having changed in the least.

However, as Yan Zhaoge pressed down on its surface with his palm, the tall stone pillar instantly began shrinking.

Finally, what resembled a footlong short rod landed within Yan Zhaoge's hand.

Not having to hold it up vertically, with it horizontal, Yan Zhaoge currently also couldn't feel any weight from it.

Following his painstaking efforts over this period of time, Yan Zhaoge had already completed his second refinement of the pillar of the Divine Palace.

Although there were still many remarkable areas that required his analysis, at the very least, Yan Zhaoge could already freely control its size.

“Senior apprentice-brother Xu, junior apprentice-sister Feng, please help me to take care of this area for a bit,” Yan Zhaoge said to Xu Fei and Feng Yunsheng by the side.

Xu Fei and Feng Yunsheng nodded, “Rest easy, we will help you to secure your path of retreat.”

“Let's go,” Keeping the pillar of the Divine Palace in the form of a rod, Yan Zhaoge hovered upwards, walking in mid-air towards the door projected from the jade coin.

Copying him, Ah Hu followed Yan Zhaoge towards that door.

Crossing through that projected door, Yan Zhaoge felt a ripping sensation for a moment. He did not panic, instead crossing through very naturally.

As he crossed, a white light flooded his eyes, but as the ripping sensation very quickly vanished, the strong light flooding his eyes vanished as well.

Yan Zhaoge narrowed his eyes for a moment before opening them once more. Before him was a verdant area teeming with life.

Following behind him, Ah Hu clicked his tongue in praise as he looked at the scenery before him, “If you didn’t tell me that this was a foreign dimension, I would still think that I was in the Eight Extremities World.”

The two seemed to be in a primordial forest, with numerous mountain peaks visible in the distance.

Turning back, they saw that door of light hanging silently in mid-air.

His hands behind his back, Yan Zhaoge proceeded leisurely forwards as he scanned their surroundings, “The size is still limited. According to that spirit formation with which the door was opened, it should be around a few hundred kilometres.”

Ah Hu sighed in praise, “The spiritual qi really is abundant ah.”

Ah Hu nodded. This foreign dimension was indeed an existence of before the Great Calamity, having luckily escaped the fate of destruction as a corner of the world.

However, it had still been affected by the aftershocks, as Yan Zhaoge could clearly feel that the spirit qi pulse here had the feeling of deteriorating.

Having always been sealed here, it could still be maintained for a rather long period of time. Being connected with the outside world now, the rate of deterioration instantly soared rapidly.

Not long after, this foreign dimension would be destroyed for good.

Silently feeling the flow of spiritual qi here, Ah Hu also analysed, “This is a little tough. Young Master, we might not have sufficient time.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “No matter, I have already analysed the spirit formation on that jade coin, which has a connection with this foreign dimension. Our target is right at the centre of this place, and we just have to head straight over.”

“There might be something that I want there,” Yan Zhaoge gazed into the distance, “Life Illuminating Immortal Stone—a treasure of Loose Practitioner He of before the Great Calamity. This is very possibly a secret realm left behind by the past Loose Practitioner He, with some of this treasures stored here. Or rather, it’s more

appropriate to call them relics.”

To others, the Life Illuminating Immortal Stone might not hold much significance. However, to Yan Zhaoge, it would help him to cross over the heavenly gulf and enter the Martial Grandmaster realm even more quickly.

This thing was already extremely rare before the time of the Great Calamity, and had become completely extinct after.

Yan Zhaoge originally hadn't held hope of finding one, and had instead been looking for possible replacements.

Finally, after having finished analysing the spirit pattern on the jade coin, he had been stunned to discover that this jade coin was very possibly a possession of the past Loose Practitioner He of before the Great Calamity.

And as Yan Zhaoge knew, Loose Practitioner He had owned a Life Illuminating Immortal Stone that year.

This way, Yan Zhaoge instantly had some hope of retrieving it.

Even if this foreign dimension didn't hold a Life Illuminating Immortal Stone, there were also possibly other things left behind from before the Great Calamity, all rather valuable objects now. This trip of Yan Zhaoge's would not be in vain.

Especially when in Yan Zhaoge's memories, Loose Practitioner

He had been rather proficient in cultivating spirit medicines and plants.

Traversing the foreign dimension, as they walked, Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu suddenly felt that something was wrong.

Ah Hu scratched his head, looking perplexedly at Yan Zhaoge, “Young Master, is it just a hallucination of mine, or is it that this speed of deterioration of spiritual qi is a little too fast even though we opened an entrance into this world?”

Yan Zhaoge raised his brows slightly, “No, your feeling is very accurate. While the deterioration of spiritual qi should increase exponentially as time passes, it is really a little too great now.”

Ah Hu stopped smiling, some seriousness added to his face, “Young Master, do you think that there could be another jade coin, also able to open a door to this foreign dimension? Could someone have come in along with us, through another open door?”

“They may not have crossed using a key like the jade coin’s spirit formation,” Yan Zhaoge said calmly, “The great thousand worlds are filled with wonders. Under some special circumstances, it is also possible to inadvertently rip space itself apart, opening up a tunnel between the Eight Extremities World and a foreign dimension.”

Yan Zhaoge surveyed their surroundings, “Some special treasures can achieve this, although setting the coordinates would be hard.”

Suddenly, the purple light of thunder flickered slightly in Yan Zhaoge's right eye.

He suddenly swivelled his head, his gaze like lightning as he looked in a single direction.

Ah Hu also had a similar feeling, letting out a cold snort as he looked in the same direction as Yan Zhaoge.

The purplish-green light of thunder flickered in Yan Zhaoge's right eye as for just that one moment, the air in the distant horizon seemed to ripple like water, before it returned to normal.

Less than a hundred kilometres away from Yan Zhaoge, in another part of the primordial forest of this foreign dimension.

A youth, standing on a branch of a huge tree, gave a low, muffled groan.

A crystal-like mirror before him suddenly sparked with electricity, then shattered.

"The Eye of the Thunder Emperor..." The youth's expression was complicated.

It was, shockingly, the Thunder Rumbling Young Master, Lin Zhou!

HSSB 237: Retainer, Martial Grandmaster!

Looking at the lightning that had momentarily flashed before him and that shattered crystal mirror, Lin Zhou's expression was complicated to the extreme.

The shattered mirror reflected his features, causing him to appear even more disordered.

“The Eye of the Thunder Emperor...” Lin Zhou was currently consumed by emotions as he could not help but think back to before at the East Strangling Snow Mountains, where he had fought with Yan Zhaoge for the Eye of the Thunder Emperor.

The Eye of the Thunder Emperor which he had originally thought of as already his had landed in Yan Zhaoge's hands, while in order to escape from Yan Zhaoge's fists, Lin Zhou had been forced to use the forbidden Transforming Blood Streaking Light Jade, adding injury upon injury, even preventing him from participating in the Heavenly Connection Meet.

Precisely the Heavenly Connection Meet where the Incident of Clear Concealed Lake had erupted.

While he had not witnessed it personally, from the rumours as well as information reports that he gathered afterwards, it was not hard for him to conclude that the Eye of the Thunder Emperor had played a major part in Yan Zhaoge's destruction of the Devilish Domain Grand Formation, and this caused Lin Zhou to feel even more unhappy within his heart.

Having seen Yan Zhaoge use his Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment to destroy his scouting treasure from far away, Lin Zhou's expression was rather dark.

He sucked in a deep breath, calming his emotions as he pondered, "Why did Yan Zhaoge appear here? Was it that when I opened the spatial door, it influenced the foreign dimension, causing other places to have spatial doors open as well, allowing him to come in by coincidence, or was it that he had a method of his own to open one?"

Lin Zhou knit his brows tightly, "Could it be that he also knows that the Immortal Crane Wings are here? Or is it like that time in the tomb of Old Man Great Sorrow, where there are treasures other than the Immortal Crane Wings here which I do not know of?"

"Indeed, this fellow is too much of a hindrance," Meeting Yan Zhaoge once more caused Lin Zhou to feel stifled.

There was a treasure that he looked very highly upon, the Immortal Crane Wings, here. It was only that there had been some difficulty in breaking through to this dimension.

According to his own memories, Lin Zhou had first sought out another piece of fortune, obtaining a treasure that could open spatial doors, before finding a damaged relic left behind by the past Loose Practitioner He to help him determine the coordinates. Thus, he had successfully opened a tunnel between the Eight

Extremities World and this foreign dimension.

“While I have also successfully broken through into the late Xiantian stage, his strength is extraordinary, with him also having a Sacred Artifact fragment on him, as well as that deplorable servant following him closely,” Lin Zhou told himself to calm down, “If I want to contest for treasures with him, it will not be easy at all.”

Lin Zhou’s gaze was distant as he raised his head to look at the world that he was in, “If this foreign dimension collapses before he can leave, even with a Sacred Artifact fragment, he would be hard pressed to escape death. However, with another door having opened here, a change has occurred in the rate of deterioration of spiritual qi, and so even I cannot accurately predict the exact time at which the spatial collapse will occur.”

After considering for a bit, Lin Zhou grit his teeth, turning and leaving from the door through which he had entered.

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Yan Zhaoge raised his head and looked into the distance, the purplish-green light of thunder within his right eye sometimes visible, sometimes not.

Ah Hu snorted, “It is not a Martial Grandmaster, just a Martial Scholar, making use of some special treasure to spy on us.”

Yan Zhaoge said, "It doesn't look like he was intentionally spying. Rather, the other party was checking out the situation of this region, and just happened to scan over here."

Ah Hu said, "Young Master, others have indeed entered. While their cultivation bases are not high, we do not know exactly how many of them there are, or whether they have any other experts."

"Right, things cannot be delayed. We should hurry over as soon as possible, lest we become plagued by this matter later on," Yan Zhaoge strode at the forefront, with Ah Hu following closely behind.

Following the spiritual qi vein here, very quickly, they emerged from the primordial forest, the scene before their eyes opening up.

Before them appeared a small thatched hut, that looked rather crude on the outside.

However, looking over it carefully, Yan Zhaoge clearly saw a silhouette above the hut, resembling an immortal crane spreading its wings.

At first glance, that silhouette appeared only the size of a sparrow, small and exquisite.

However, looking closely once more, as it spread its long feathers, it seemed to envelop the entire foreign dimension.

After observing it for a while, Yan Zhaoge nodded slowly, “Restrictions formed of Loose Practitioner He’s fist-intent; they have remained here up till now.”

Looking at the thatched hut beneath the silhouette of the immortal crane, Yan Zhaoge snapped his fingers, “To go in, we must first break through these restrictions.”

Surveying their surroundings, as he walked towards the thatched hut, Yan Zhaoge said to Ah Hu, “Ah Hu, guard me. Pay attention to the surroundings.”

Ah Hu responded in the affirmative, standing sternly by the side as he increased his spiritual awareness to the maximum, diligently observing the surroundings.

Time passed unceasingly. While there was no sunrise or sunset in this foreign dimension, unceasingly counting the time silently within his heart, Ah Hu took note of Yan Zhaoge’s progress at breaking through the restrictions here.

This world was not big. For someone of the two’s cultivation bases, walking would not take too much time.

The reason they had worried that the time they had before the space collapsed was insufficient was considering situations like now, when the original owner of this space blocked the path with restrictions.

Seeing Yan Zhaoge unceasingly work near the thatched hut, Ah Hu did not relax, because he could feel the deterioration of the surrounding spiritual qi getting faster and faster, as well as more and more obvious.

The abundant spiritual qi that they could feel upon entering this foreign dimension was already no more.

“Huh?” Ah Hu’s gaze suddenly hardened, resembling the rousing of a slumbering tiger, ready to devour everybody it saw.

He stood silently where he was, not moving in the slightest. After a moment, he suddenly leapt up!

In the space of a breath, Ah Hu appeared on the boundary at the other side of the forest, the strong wind that gusted as a result directly toppling several gigantic trees that soared up to the heavens!

The dazed figures of two Martial Scholars were revealed. Only when Ah Hu was before them did they regain their wits.

But not waiting for them to react, they were already soaring through the air, thrown out by Ah Hu without any grounds for resistance at all.

Ah Hu’s figure flashed, already elsewhere in the blink of an eye. There appeared another Martial Scholar, originally having wanted to lay there in ambush, silently awaiting an opportunity. Who

knew that Ah Hu would suddenly make a move.

He knew that things were not good for him, yet without even having any time to react, the Ah Hu who had flung two people away was already before him in an instant.

This Xiantian Martial Scholar wanted to resist, but how could he? He was not Ah Hu's opponent, as he was also flung into the air by Ah Hu.

From the distant forest, a surprised voice resounded, "Martial Grandmaster?"

Hearing those words, the three Martial Scholars, struggling to rise, involuntarily glanced at Ah Hu, not even daring to utter a sound as they then crawled and clambered away with all they had.

Ah Hu looked coldly in the direction of the voice, where a middle-aged man now appeared before him, also a Martial Grandmaster.

Looking closely at his garb, feeling his aura-qi, Ah Hu's gaze grew even colder.

The newcomer, was clearly of the Sacred Sun Clan.

This middle-aged man appraised Ah Hu, "I have heard of you before, a little thug always following Yan Zhaoge. However, it was fine when you were still a Martial Scholar. Now that you are

already a Martial Grandmaster, you are actually still willing to be the retainer of a Martial Scholar?”

“Utterly ridiculous! Don’t you know that you can already create a sect of your own, leading to the rise of a new second-rate power?”

Ah Hu hooked his ear with his fingers, then pointed, “What I do-what do you care?”

The Sacred Sun Clan Martial Grandmaster laughed coldly, “While our Sacred Sun Clan said not to start a conflict with Broad Creed Mountain over this period of time, this does not include the seeking out of fortune.”

“You should be new to the Martial Grandmaster realm, no? Well, let me give you a lesson today-consider it a welcome.”

HSSB 238: You Again?

Having finished speaking, this Sacred Sun Clan Martial Grandmaster did not hesitate, directly hitting out with a palm.

A fierce light instantly surfaced on his palm, the illusory heaven and earth formed of his aura-qi condensing into glowing spirit soil.

A Heaven Striking Palm, resembling the descent of the great sun, instantly illuminated the entire area as it descended towards Ah Hu.

Ah Hu smiled savagely, his entire body's aura-qi surging as strong black winds surfaced, his entire person resembling a human hurricane, a black storm that obscured the heavens and covered the earth wherever it went, as the very sunlight seemed to have dimmed.

“Indeed of Black Nightmare Mountain's direct lineage,” His opponent smiled coldly, “But even if it is Black Nightmare Mountain, so what?”

Saying thus, his Heaven Striking Palm clenched and unclenched, forcibly meeting Ah Hu's Ghost Tiger Divine Claw head-on.

The Sacred Sun Clan Martial Grandmaster chuckled, “A Martial Grandmaster being a retainer-do you think that your master is a Martial Saint? What a joke!”

He unclenched his fingers, five golden lights surging into existence, seemingly transforming into a massive golden palm which slammed out towards Ah Hu.

Baring his teeth, overflowing with brutality, Ah Hu asked, “Is it not you who are treating yourself as a Martial Saint?”

Saying thus, Ah Hu interlocked his claws, ten strong gusts of wind abruptly slicing out, slicing apart the very air before him.

That massive golden palm was immediately sliced to pieces, turning into streaks of light that were extinguished within the air, as though they were ripped apart.

Ah Hu abruptly crouched, then leapt, resembling a ferocious tiger out of a cage as he was instantly before his opponent.

One hand clawing for the throat, one hand clawing for the chest, he was filled with killing intent, as his enemy could only feel a chill penetrating into his very bones.

The Martial Grandmaster of the Sacred Sun Clan was shocked, “What fierce power-how come it feels comparable to Tang Yonghao having newly ascended into the Martial Grandmaster realm?”

But, how was this possible?

What kind of figure was Tang Yonghao?

After all, in the Fire Domain, in the hearts of most Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners, Tang Yonghao was indisputably the number one person of the Eight Extremities World's younger generation!

Even if he couldn't compare to Yan Di's complete dominance in the past, Tang Yonghao was also the most outstanding martial practitioner of his generation.

In the Heavenly Connection Meet, Tang Yonghao had defeated the Seven Seas Young Master Song Chao, the leading figure of the younger generation of the Sacred Sun Clan's longtime enemy, Jade Sea City.

While he had fought to a draw with Broad Creed Mountain's Xu Fei later on, and was also overshadowed by Yan Zhaoge who suddenly sprung up to prominence from nowhere, Tang Yonghao was indisputably an elite of the current younger generation, a genius amongst geniuses.

Geniuses had different benchmarks from normal people, and if levels were drawn for geniuses and monstrous figures, Tang Yonghao would still be a peak figure who presided over those of the same generation.

This Martial Grandmaster of the Sacred Sun Clan even doubted his own judgement a little at this moment.

This foolish looking big guy following Yan Zhaoge around all day

long like an attendant actually had strength comparable to Tang Yonghao's?

How laughable!

In the War of the Eastern Tang that year, when Ah Hu had still been a Xiantian Martial Scholar, he had once battled with martial practitioners of the Sacred Sun Clan.

However, comparing it with back then, this Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioner discovered that Ah Hu's combat prowess at the same cultivation level was actually clearly even stronger than before!

"A ghost in broad daylight!" This Martial Grandmaster grit his teeth, executing the Leap of the Rising Sun, barely dodging Ah Hu's twin claws.

However, Ah Hu's speed was clearly faster than his opponent's, immediately following up with another claw, directly clawing towards the crown of his opponent's head!

His opponent was also a veteran of a hundred battles, instantly not daring to continue fighting on as he saw this situation.

The Heaven Striking Palm was a momentum-based suppressive martial art that grew smoother and smoother the more it hit, unceasingly expanding one's advantage. However, once the advantage was overturned, it would instead only grow more and

more disadvantageous for the user.

This Martial Grandmaster of the Sacred Sun Clan calmed his heart, immediately switching from the Heaven Striking Palm to the Sunset Thousand Illusory Palms, fighting a protracted battle with Ah Hu with lithe and graceful changes in technique.

Illuminated by the light of sunset, the primordial forest was instantly painted the colour of twilight.

However, having gained the upper hand, Ah Hu was unforgiving in his momentum, his movements as unpredictable as a phantom's, demonstrating a deep understanding of the essence of the Ghost Tiger Divine Claw as his claw attacks were violent and ferocious to the extreme, seemingly able to rip the very space apart.

That Sacred Sun Clan Martial Grandmaster was beat by him into constant retreat, barely managing to hold on.

If not for Ah Hu still splitting up a portion of his attention to stay vigilant of potential enemies in the surroundings, his opponent would long since have died by his claws!

As the two clashed, the surrounding area was directly levelled as countless towering trees that soared up to the heavens fell, either burnt to ashes or sliced into shattered fragments.

A glow emanated around Yan Zhaoge's body as he was enveloped

by the restrictions of fist-intent left behind by Loose Practitioner He.

Affected by the aftershocks by the fight between the two Martial Grandmasters, some marks appeared in the originally formless fist-intent restrictions.

Having been enveloped by the restrictions from Loose Practitioner He's fist-intent, while Yan Zhaoge's path to the thatched hut was blocked off, it also protected him from being affected by the ongoing fight, able to focus his mind on breaking the restrictions.

Yan Zhaoge could feel the restrictions of fist-intent before him currently relaxing unceasingly as it weakened naturally.

These restrictions of fist-intent were more or less connected to this foreign dimension, and with the spiritual qi here deteriorating and the entire space moving towards destruction, it was also affected by this to some extent.

Yan Zhaoge was currently in a race against time, having to break the restrictions and get what he wanted before this foreign dimension collapsed.

As time passed, Yan Zhaoge got closer and closer to the thatched hut.

Finally, the immortal crane silhouette above the thatched hut let

out a long cry before gradually dissipating.

The world before Yan Zhaoge suddenly relaxed as no more obstructions existed before him, with him able to directly rush towards the thatched hut.

But just at that instant where the restrictions of fist-intent completely vanished, in the distance, a powerful aura suddenly appeared!

Quick as flashing lightning, a figure rushed towards the thatched hut!

It was also a Martial Grandmaster, who had been waiting for Yan Zhaoge to break the restrictions before making his move.

Ah Hu had always been on his guard for such a situation, as with a roar that shocked the very heavens and caused the earth to quake, his entire person blocked the other party's path like a raging hurricane, stopping his forward momentum with a single punch!

That Sacred Sun Clan Martial Grandmaster wanted to make a move, but Ah Hu had not forgotten about him.

Interlocking his palms, wind howled madly as Ah Hu's fist-intent spread completely outwards, transforming into a storm that enveloped the entire surrounding area, completely obscuring the surroundings of the thatched hut.

Combatting two with his own power, forcibly shaking the attacks of the two Martial Grandmasters, as both were unable to approach the thatched hut by a single step.

Yan Zhaoge entered the thatched hut, as what first entered his eyes was a snowy white cloak, sewed completely of the feathers of cranes.

The cloak of crane feathers hung within the room, as on a short table beneath were placed a few items.

Yan Zhaoge saw the Life Illuminating Immortal Stone amongst them with a single glance.

However, as he approached the short table, the cloak of crane feathers suddenly shook and expanded, resembling an immortal crane flashing its feathers as countless strong winds gusted towards Yan Zhaoge, making it difficult for him to approach.

Yan Zhaoge frowned slightly, the purplish-green light of thunder flickering within his right eye as it held off the strong winds, before he reached out for the things on that short table.

Just at this time, Ah Hu's enraged roar resounded from outside!

Then, a dim light flickered at the door of the room, soundlessly stabbing towards Yan Zhaoge's back!

“You again?” Yan Zhaoge raised his brows.

The attacker was none other than that Martial Grandmaster who had ambushed and nearly killed him back in the devilish formation at Clear Concealed Lake!

HSSB 239: Dark Light Sword, Immortal Crane Wings

Within Yan Zhaoge's vision, a black figure flickered, foreign yet familiar.

Saying that it was foreign was because he had only seen it twice before.

Saying that it was familiar was because Yan Zhaoge had previously experienced the aura of death at this sword.

The newcomer wore a jet-black mask as well as a hood, his entire body swathed in a black cloak, resembling dark clouds pressuring a city.

The only light from his entire body was from that pair of yellowed pupils which emanated a bloodred light, as well as the dim sword-light shining in his hands!

Yet another soundless sword, seemingly holding no presence at all, stabbed towards Yan Zhaoge.

As compared to the ambush back in the devilish domain at Clear Concealed Lake, the black-robed man's movements having already been exposed by Ah Hu, he didn't have to move so covertly this time, as his attack was even swifter and fiercer than before!

Like a jet-black bolt of lightning, the dim sword light stabbed towards Yan Zhaoge.

The Eye of the Thunder Emperor of Yan Zhaoge's right eye was currently entangling with the cloak of crane feathers in mid-air.

The attack of the black-robed Martial Grandmaster came precisely when Yan Zhaoge had split up his strength, fast, precise, vicious!

Wanting to condemn Yan Zhaoge to death with a single strike!

Like rumbling thunder, Yan Zhaoge raised his speed to the maximum, speedily flashing to the side.

In terms of speed and movement techniques, Yan Zhaoge was superior to the most outstanding Heavenly Thunder Hall martial practitioners at the same cultivation level, and even by quite a bit!

While the newcomer was a Martial Grandmaster, with it not being a covert assassination, Yan Zhaoge managed to successfully evade his sword.

However, his swords came each one faster than the previous, dim light flickering as his sword-light chased after Yan Zhaoge in hot pursuit.

The other party's attacks didn't have momentum that soared up to the heavens like Ah Hu and the others, whose surroundings

were in chaos as they hit out with their palms, the rocks and mountains of the great earth where they were all shattered into smithereens.

However, that sword-light which seemed weak and dim actually seemed to have an extremely fearsome power hidden within.

Yan Zhaoge did not doubt in the least that if he was stabbed by this sword-light, his fleshly body that had been ceaselessly tempered and strengthened by the Spirit Rhino Demonic Fist and the Ocean Stabilising Spirit Fist would be pierced through in an instant without question.

He had already recognised the martial arts that the other party cultivated in.

Dark Light Killing Art, with one's power focused in a single line, incomparably refined and indestructible, the aura-qi condensed to the point where its light, sound as well as presence could be concealed, resembling the self-obscuring of a divine object.

It was only when it reaped an opponent's life that it would erupt with brightness.

What Yan Zhaoge was especially wary of was that his opponent's current weapon was a low-grade spirit artifact.

Yan Zhaoge had many low-grade spirit artifacts, more than any other Martial Scholar had.

These were mostly spoils of war that he had obtained from his enemies.

However, the problem was that the past owners of these spoils of war had mostly been Martial Scholars like Yan Zhaoge.

And Martial Scholars were actually unable to fully draw out the power of spirit artifacts!

It was different for Martial Grandmasters. Even though the opponent before him was only at the first level of the Martial Grandmaster realm, with a cultivation of the early Spirit Vessel stage, with a low-grade spirit artifact on hand, he was like a tiger given wings!

A spirit artifact in the hands of a Martial Grandmaster and a spirit artifact in the hands of a Martial Scholar were two completely different concepts altogether.

This black-robed Martial Grandmaster moved, not saying a single word as he executed his Dark Light Killing Art to the point of perfection, also completely unleashing the power of the spirit artifact sword in his hands.

The sword-light was dim, seemingly looking weak and gloomy, but each sword was faster than the previous, stronger than the previous, attacking towards Yan Zhaoge with a momentum of a chain of mountains toppling a sea!

The Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment temporarily entangled with the cloak of crane feathers, Yan Zhaoge did not have it easy against the opponent before him.

Outside the hut, the enraged Ah Hu expanded his full power, wanting to rush in.

However, while his opponents were not all from the same place, they all worked together at this moment as though by a tacit agreement to clamp down on Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu who had held the initiative.

Ah Hu was similarly a Martial Grandmaster now, as the power of his Black Nightmare Armour was completely unleashed, dark clouds roiling and black wind roaring as the big guy resembled a lord of the devils.

Yan Zhaoge had also handed the mid-grade spirit artifact, the Hidden Clear Sunlight Sabre, to Ah Hu.

While as a Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster, Ah Hu was unable to completely draw out its power, he could already wield a portion of it.

While Ah Hu did not cultivate in the sabre, he currently wielded the Hidden Clear Sunlight Sabre with his qi, concealing it within the black storm formed of his fist-intent.

The spirit artifact sabre mixed with the sharp daggers of wind, causing enemies to be hard pressed to defend against them.

However, Ah Hu's opponents also had spirit artifacts on them. Other than the two Martial Grandmasters at the start, another Martial Grandmaster very quickly joined in as well.

Faced with their collective attacks, Ah Hu remained undaunted, with him even getting more and more of an upper hand as time went by, causing his three opponents to feel shocked and afraid.

It was only that, entangled by these three opponents, Ah Hu would not be able to rush into the thatched hut to reinforce Yan Zhaoge within a short period of time.

Ah Hu was frustrated to the extreme, "Other than Young Master's, there should be another door here. People of so many different places actually came."

"Right, there was possibly only that spying Martial Scholar at the beginning. Realising that he was not our match, he leaked out the news, attracting all these people over!"

Within the thatched hut, wearing the Lofty Mountain Armour, Yan Zhaoge was in a protracted battle with the black-robed Martial Grandmaster.

Looking within his yellowed pupils that emanated a bloodred light, other than coldness, Yan Zhaoge could also see resentment.

Within the thatched hut, Yan Zhaoge was in an intense battle with the masked Decimating Abyss martial practitioner, while outside of it, the four Martial Grandmasters was fighting an even more heated battle that caused the heavens to roil and the earth to overturn.

If not for that cloak of crane feathers within the thatched hut which vaguely seemed to be protecting it, this place would long since have been levelled by their fight.

With so many Martial Grandmasters here, all the Martial Scholars who had entered this foreign dimension all wisely retreated.

Perhaps there were some rare, precious treasures here, but with such a situation, it was most likely out of their reach.

If they got swept up in a battle between Martial Grandmasters, they might not even know how they died afterwards.

However, there was one exception.

It was precisely the one who had leaked out the news of precious treasures as well Yan Zhaoge being here, Lin Zhou.

Calmly and carefully avoiding the battle of the four Martial Grandmasters, he approached the thatched hut.

With Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu being engaged in battle, his chances of obtaining the treasure was greatly increased.

The Immortal Crane Wings, precisely that cloak of crane feathers hung within the thatched hut, were the main goal of Lin Zhou's current quest.

Of course, if he had the chance, he would take away all the other treasures there as well.

If he could leave Yan Zhaoge behind for good, that would naturally be even better.

Looking into the thatched hut through its open window, Lin Zhou focused his gaze on the Immortal Crane Wings, his eyes blazing, "With this treasure, it would not be impossible to leave Yan Zhaoge behind!"

However, before Lin Zhou could take a step forward, he abruptly stared wide-eyed.

Using the Lofty Mountain Armour to forcibly take a strike of that masked Martial Grandmaster, Yan Zhaoge made use of the force of the clash to fly backwards.

The light of thunder shone in Yan Zhaoge's right eye as the power of the fragment of the Eye of the Thunder Emperor temporarily locked the Immortal Crane Wings in place, before Yan Zhaoge's entire person slammed into the Immortal Crane Wings,

wanting to wrap this cloak of crane feathers over himself!

“You won’t be in time to refine the Immortal Crane Wings for your own use,” Lin Zhou smiled coldly, “Instead having delivered yourself to your opponent’s sword.”

Indeed, the sword within that masked Martial Grandmaster’s hands did not even stop as it continued stabbing towards Yan Zhaoge, directly breaking through the defence of the Lofty Mountain Armour!

The dim sword-light slashed through Yan Zhaoge’s clothes, directly arriving before his chest, as Yan Zhaoge felt a chill at the location of his heart!

HSSB 240: A Lin Zhou Who Wants To Vomit Blood

Yan Zhaoge's figure halted for a moment as he entered the Immortal Crane Wings, giving his opponent a chance.

The sword-light broke through the Lofty Mountain Armour, slashing through Yan Zhaoge's clothes, directly arriving before Yan Zhaoge's heart, as Yan Zhaoge felt a chill run through his body at this moment.

However, Yan Zhaoge's expression was calm and unperturbed, not panicked in the least as he focused on the opponent before him.

A golden light suddenly flashed on the surface of his body!

As the golden light flashed, Yan Zhaoge's entire body seemed to be plated by a layer of golden light, as he resembled a golden statue!

At Yan Zhaoge's chest, a simple yet profound rune appeared, helping Yan Zhaoge to block his enemy's sword!

Bloodred light surged within the yellowed eyes of that Martial Grandmaster, that polluted glow piercing as it had never been before.

He continued exerting greater force with the sword within his hands, the dim-sword light suddenly erupting at this moment, infinite, sharp radiance filling the entire room, causing the entire thatched hut that was under the protection of the Immortal Crane Wings to shake, seeming like it could collapse at any moment!

Yan Zhaoge opened his mouth, chanting an ancient, complicated-sounding incantation.

No one here could understand it but Lin Zhou who hailed from the Thunder Domain, who vaguely felt that this strange language suddenly uttered by Yan Zhaoge seemed to be an extremely rare dialect of the northernmost part of the Thunder Domain, the Gold Region.

However, Lin Zhou also didn't understand the meaning within, as he was currently only focused on one thing.

As Yan Zhaoge chanted that ancient incantation, that golden lustre around his body grew even more condensed, the rune on his chest even clearer and more profound.

Streaks of golden light spread, keeping the enemy's sword-light at bay.

Lin Zhou frowned, "What exactly is this thing?!"

Yan Zhaoge was currently completely within the cloak of crane feathers, temporarily keeping it locked down with the power of the

fragment of the Eye of the Thunder Emperor.

He reached out, draping the cloak of crane feathers around his own body, before, punching!

Yan Zhaoge's qi and blood as well as his martial concepts surged at this moment, as he began attempting to communicate and interact with this unique treasure known as the Immortal Crane Wings.

Although the Immortal Crane Wings still possessed spirituality, with Loose Practitioner He having been dead for so many years, it had gradually turned into an ownerless object.

Protecting this thatched hut, the final wish of its previous owner, had virtually become its primary instinct.

However, the Immortal Crane Wings itself did not reject another person coming to refine it.

Yan Zhaoge practised his fist with the Immortal Crane Wings on, merging his fist-intent within it, as its crane feathers slowly trembled.

A silhouette of a white crane gradually appeared behind Yan Zhaoge, merging within the illusory heaven and earth formed of his fist intent's aura-qi, becoming a part of it.

Yan Zhaoge's gaze shone as he met the gaze of the masked

Martial Grandmaster before him.

If he had not had been sufficiently confident, how would he have dared to risk exposing his vitals to the other's sword?

While the Eye of the Thunder Emperor had been entangled, while the Lofty Mountain Armour had been broken through, Yan Zhaoge still had the Golden Talismanic Body!

During the incident of Clear Concealed Lake, he had obtained a golden talisman after defeating the fallen Xie Ziyi. While Xie Ziyi had not understood how it should be used, Yan Zhaoge had already successfully deciphered its use!

This secret technique of the extreme north refined golden talismans into qi. After a martial practitioner absorbed it, they would be able to obtain a golden body of iron bones, allowing the martial practitioner's basic defensive power to increase.

When faced with extremely dangerous attacks, they could deplete the golden talismanic qi, transforming into the Golden Talismanic Body in order to protect themselves.

The heavier the blocked attack, the more golden talismanic power was unleashed and the more the golden talismanic qi depleted. After repeated use, it would surely run dry one day.

However, its defensive power was not something to scoff at.

At this moment, it helped Yan Zhaoge to forcibly withstand the full-powered killing blow of a low-grade spirit artifact-wielding early Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster!

Making use of the time bought by the Golden Talismanic Body, Yan Zhaoge began refining the Immortal Crane Wings with all his might, taking this unique treasure for his own use!

While his original target in coming to this foreign dimension was the Life Illuminating Immortal Stone, and it would not be a wasted trip as long as he obtained it, after carefully observing the Immortal Crane Wings, Yan Zhaoge found it to be a precious unique treasure that was rather hard to come by.

While it could not be ranked according to the grades of artifacts, it still possessed boundless wonderful uses.

At this, Yan Zhaoge naturally accepted it with thanks, refining it.

As he analysed and comprehended the concept within the Immortal Crane Wings as well as its circulation of spiritual qi, Yan Zhaoge focused coldly on the masked Martial Grandmaster before him.

The other person was also staring fixedly at Yan Zhaoge, his yellowed pupils filled with coldness.

That coldness seemed not to be targeted at Yan Zhaoge himself, but at every martial practitioner of Broad Creed Mountain.

His gaze similarly cold, Yan Zhaoge abruptly let out a long cry, resembling the clear, bright cry of a crane.

The next moment, Yan Zhaoge's arms shook as the Immortal Crane Wings swathed around him suddenly rose, resembling an Immortal Crane flashing its wings as it spread them wide.

The edges of the cloak abruptly flashed with a dazzling light before transforming into numerous feathers of light, pointing directly towards the masked Martial Grandmaster before Yan Zhaoge.

Then, feathers of light that resembled a heavy thunderstorm rained down as they shot towards that Martial Grandmaster, every single crane feather like a sharp blade!

With a muffled groan, that fallen masked Martial Grandmaster finally retracted his sword for defence, his sword-light transforming into a ball of light, withstanding the attacks that were like a tempestuous storm, as he simultaneously retreated backwards!

He had to retreat, because as the Immortal Crane Wings was gradually refined by Yan Zhaoge, it also meant that Yan Zhaoge's Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment would finally also be free to act.

If he did not go now, the person who would be left behind in this place today would very possibly not be Yan Zhaoge, but him!

His opponent wanting to retreat, Yan Zhaoge wouldn't let him go as easy as that. Flicking his wrist, with a low cry, the Jade Dragon Sword flashed out of its sheath at lightning speed, transforming into a jade light which chopped directly towards the enemy before him!

A low noise resounded as blood splattered the air.

That fallen Martial Grandmaster had half his mask sliced off by Yan Zhaoge, leaving behind a wound on his face from which fresh blood was flowing uncontrollably.

Not uttering a sound, this person raised his sleeves to cover his face, not even looking back as he turned and ran.

Yan Zhaoge still had not completely refined the Immortal Crane Wings, with it currently being inconvenient for him to move about, but a shocking light still shot out from his eyes, "While less than half of his face was revealed, it still seemed rather familiar..."

He frowned, standing within the thatched hut as he turned and looked out of the window. The person he had felt approaching this place earlier had already vanished without a trace.

Outside the thatched hut, Lin Zhou did not hesitate, escaping speedily.

Seeing Yan Zhaoge withstand the killing blow of that Martial

Grandmaster with his Golden Talismanic Body and begin refining the Immortal Crane Wings, Lin Zhou had already completely discarded his thoughts of making a move.

Of everyone here, other than the Yan Zhaoge who was currently refining the Immortal Crane Wings, Lin Zhou was the most familiar with this treasure.

Moreover, there was still the fragment of the Eye of the Thunder Emperor.

But it was precisely because of this that he felt his heart was bleeding at this moment!

After the Sacred Artifact fragment, this was the second time he had helplessly watched on as the treasure he thought would surely be his had eventually landed in Yan Zhaoge's hands!

For just a moment, the depressed Lin Zhou felt like smashing his head against that great towering tree beside him.

Seeing Yan Zhaoge use the Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment to lock the Immortal Crane Wings in place, next refine the Immortal Crane Wings, before domineeringly forcing a lofty Martial Grandmaster into retreat, while he himself could only flee as fast as he could...

Lin Zhou felt useless to the point of wanting to vomit blood.

HSSB 241: The Legendary Crow's Mouth

“A Heavenly Thunder Hall martial practitioner...” Within the thatched hut, thinking of the breathing techniques of that enemy who had been spying from the side, Yan Zhaoge looked like he was smiling whilst also not, “An old acquaintance?”

Shaking his head slightly, he retracted his thoughts, refocusing his mind on refining the Immortal Crane Wings.

Each and every feather on the Immortal Crane Wings seemed to be shaking slightly at this moment, as though all of them had a life of their own.

Accompanied by Yan Zhaoge's refinement, the clear cries of cranes emanated from every single feather, getting louder and more sonorous.

Finally, the cries of cranes died down, Yan Zhaoge's gaze flickering as the Immortal Crane Wings became completely silent, transforming into a cloak of crane feathers draped over Yan Zhaoge.

This time, there was no longer anyone obstructing Yan Zhaoge. With a sweeping motion, all of the things on the short table, the Life Illuminating Immortal Stone included, fell into Yan Zhaoge's hands.

Standing within the thatched hut, Yan Zhaoge bowed towards it, “Senior Loose Practitioner He, Yan Zhaoge thanks you here.”

Swathed in the cloak of crane feathers, he left the thatched hut, and found that the battlefield outside of it was already destroyed beyond recognition.

When that fallen masked Martial Grandmaster had escaped, Ah Hu's three opponents had felt a chill running through their hearts.

That Martial Grandmaster having escaped meant that he had not been able to take down Yan Zhaoge.

Meanwhile, there was that big man before them that truly resembled a starving tiger, taking on the three of them at the same time, holding the upper hand as it was getting harder and harder from them to parry his blows.

While they were moved by the treasures within the thatched hut, with things already at this point, there was clearly no longer any hope of obtaining them.

If things went on like this, they might instead lose their lives here.

The trio instantly decided to retreat, beginning to think of a way to extricate themselves from this situation.

When they had a common enemy, they could join hands and work together in attacking him.

However, when they all decided to retreat, preparing to escape, their cooperation would naturally break off, with everyone only thinking of how to secure their own safety and flee.

As there were originally also no ties between them, they were wholly unconcerned about the fates of one another.

If the other party's death could secure their safe escape, none of them would have any misgivings.

Therefore, the three Martial Grandmasters put on a good show together.

They didn't have to run faster than Ah Hu-just running faster than the other two would be sufficient.

That Sacred Sun Clan Martial Grandmaster, originally having the strongest foundation, also being the most powerful and being in possession of a peak movement technique like the Leap of the Rising Sun, should originally have the greatest chances of escaping.

However, Ah Hu specifically paid more attention to him, directly throwing the Hidden Clear Sunlight Sabre over with the momentum of a flying dagger, directly piercing him right through the heart.

Eventually, only one of the Martial Grandmasters managed to escape successfully, with the other one becoming a ghost under the

claws of a starving tiger, slain by Ah Hu on the spot.

Coming before Ah Hu, Yan Zhaoge smiled, “The way you are now, you are frightening enough to stop little children from crying at night.”

Ah Hu’s body was full of bloodstains, the baleful air on his body surging to the heavens as he resembled a god of death.

He grinned, “A pity that we couldn’t leave them all behind.”

Hearing his words, Yan Zhaoge murmured to himself, “Right, a pity that we couldn’t leave them all behind...”

Ah Hu asked curiously, “Young Master, what is it?”

Yan Zhaoge shook his head, as within his mind, the scene of that Decimating Abyss martial practitioner’s mask breaking and his partially revealed face flashed through his mind once more.

While the other party had quickly raised his hand for concealment, with Yan Zhaoge’s current cultivation base, his vision was such that he had still seen that scene which had gone by in a flash.

“While less than half of his face was visible...I have definitely seen this person before,” Yan Zhaoge stroked his lower chin, recovering as he surveyed their surroundings, “The deterioration of spiritual qi has already reached its final stage. This foreign

dimension is already not far from collapse.”

“We have to make haste and hurry back to that spirit formation door. A bit of time is still required for the journey back.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, patting the cloak of crane feathers over his shoulder, “However, what’s good is that with this thing now, much time can actually be saved.”

Ah Hu came up to him, asking curiously, “Young Master, what’s this?”

Yan Zhaoge said, “In the past, a senior merged his fist-intent with the feathers of a spirit crane, forming such a cloak.”

“Not entering the ranks of artifacts, it can be considered a unique treasure, possessing many subtle and wonderful uses, its weak point being that the spiritual energy and spiritual qi will be depleted, and will have to be nourished and replenished by the owner for a time after having dried up before it can be used once more.”

“However, looking at its many subtle and wonderful uses, these flaws that it has, most of the time, can virtually be ignored.”

Yan Zhaoge patted the Immortal Crane Wings, smiling, “In entering this time, the Life Illuminating Immortal Stone was originally what I came for, and would have been enough to satisfy me. This thing can be considered an unexpected, fortunate gain.”

Ah Hu said, “Right, but Young Master, I never thought that so many people would actually enter this time.”

“I feel that the bastard who was spying on us earlier, seeing that he was not our match, feared that he was unable to wrestle for the treasures with us. He therefore churned the waters turbid, wanting to fish in murky waters as he spread the news out and drew so many experts in.”

Yan Zhaoge brought Ah Hu behind the thatched hut, where there was a medicinal field, “Your guess, is most likely correct.”

Ah Hu ground his teeth hatefully, “That bastard had better not fall in my hands, or I’d definitely teach him a lesson!”

Yan Zhaoge said, “While this foreign dimension will collapse very soon, and most people would not risk coming in, we will still have to remain vigilant of enemies. We should also move a bit faster.”

Saying thus, Yan Zhaoge speedily identified the spirit medicines within the medicinal field, “Wa, there are many species that existed before the Great Calamity but are currently extinct growing here now. We have really not made a wasted trip this time.”

As he helped Yan Zhaoge to harvest the medicines, Ah Hu said casually, “It is lucky that of the four Martial Grandmasters who entered this time, all of them were only at the early Spirit Vessel

stage. If their cultivation bases had been higher, we might not have been able to handle them.”

“Especially if there had been an Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster-now that’d have been bad.”

As he said thus, Yan Zhaoge suddenly felt a piercing pain in his right eye as Ah Hu’s face also changed.

The next moment, the light of fire lit up in the distant horizon, illuminating the sky a crimson red.

The light of fire speedily approached the thatched hut, violent waves of qi sweeping the surrounding area.

An explosive roar resounded, “Surnamed Yan, I want to see who can save you this time!”

The familiar voice and the familiar tone instead left Yan Zhaoge slightly stunned for a moment, “...Crimson Spirit Flag Master?”

The newcomer was, shockingly, the remnant of the destroyed Five Spirit Flags with the highest cultivation base, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master!

That year, the Five Spirit Flags had been destroyed at the hands of Yan Zhaoge’s father, Yan Di. The Crimson Spirit Master had borne hatred for this for many years. Having been obstructed in his efforts to kill Yan Zhaoge in the Eastern Tang previously, he

had then fled without a trace.

Who would have thought that he would actually appear once more in this foreign dimension today.

Yan Zhaoge currently didn't have the leisure to ponder on why the other party had appeared here, as there was only one thought in his mind.

This Crimson Spirit Flag Master was at the fourth level of the Martial Grandmaster realm, an early Spirit Essence Martial Grandmaster expert!

Ah Hu was left gaping and wide-eyed, as he really felt like slapping himself in the face, "...Did it really have to be so effective?"

HSSB 242: Flying Through The Heavens, Tunnelling Through The Earth

The surrounding heavens and earth were blazing hot, the roiling heat waves nearly causing the feeling of suffocation.

However, Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu instead felt themselves assaulted by cold.

After becoming Martial Grandmasters, martial practitioners would step into a whole new world, turning the illusory form to true spirit, from false to real, beginning to truly touch the underlying principles of this world.

For Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmasters, moving from the early to the mid to the late stage, nourishing spirit soil, forming a spirit seed, birthing spirit shoots, it was all part of the process of nurturing a true martial spirit.

At the peak of the Spirit Vessel stage, a Martial Grandmaster would have successfully nurtured a true martial spirit of his or her own, thus stepping into the Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster realm.

Afterwards, the true spirit would merge with the aura-qi, cultivating aura into essence. With aura-qi transforming into true essence, one would experience a great leap in power.

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master was a Martial Grandmaster

expert of the Essence Spirit stage just like this.

As his true essence expanded outwards, it directly transformed into true, blazing fire, burning the plains and incinerating the heavens.

Yan Zhaoge rolled his eyes, saying unhappily of Ah Hu, “How did I not discover it earlier-you really have a crow’s mouth ah.”

Ah Hu’s face looked bitter as he did not speak.

Yan Zhaoge shook his head, not planning to go down without a fight. Along with his intentions, the Immortal Crane Wings on his shoulders directly unfurled, transforming into two gigantic wings.

Each and every crane feather flickered with a lustrous spiritual light, resembling crystals.

Yan Zhaoge did not have the leisure to distinguish species at this moment as he grabbed out, directly plucking out the majority of the spirit grasses and medicines of the medicinal field.

Afterwards, he grabbed Ah Hu with his other hand, his wings spreading as he soared into the sky, speeding off into the distance!

The Immortal Crane Wings were truly divine, as Yan Zhaoge’s flying speed was still extremely fast despite carrying someone along with him.

However, the fiery light behind him that resembled the waves of an ocean was also not slow as it chased after Yan Zhaoge in hot pursuit.

From the waves of fire resounded the scolding of the Crimson Spirit Flag Master, “One surnamed Yan, you will pay the debt for your father Yan Di today!”

Yan Zhaoge ignored him, fully focused on unleashing the power of the Immortal Crane Wings to soar forward unceasingly.

Having reached great heights, clumps of cloud qi formed a sea of clouds before them which Yan Zhaoge shot through unceasingly.

The blazing fire behind him swept directly through the sea of clouds, devouring it unceasingly.

Yan Zhaoge was flying at extreme speeds as a fire dragon suddenly shot out of the waves of fire behind him, shooting towards him.

Frowning slightly, Yan Zhaoge dodged to the side, evading the fiery light.

The fiery light missed, plunging into the dense sea of clouds, slicing through the orderly cloud layer like a sharp blade before disappearing within the sea of clouds.

The next moment, with a massive boom, the vast sea of clouds before Yan Zhaoge caught aflame, as a sea of crimson flames was formed in mid-air.

The great amount of clouds was instantly vaporized by the flames, while the blazing fire formed a wall blocking Yan Zhaoge's path.

The wings behind Yan Zhaoge's back flickered as he plummeted downwards rapidly, evading the flames blocking his way.

But this way, his speed was slightly reduced, as the Crimson Spirit Flag Master behind him reduced the distance between them.

Brought along by Yan Zhaoge, gazing backwards, Ah Hu asked, "Young Master ah, can't you use the Sacred Artifact fragment to give him a good one?"

Yan Zhaoge answered, "Resisting the Black Dragon Dread in the Great Western Desert earlier, and also entangling with the Immortal Crane Wings just now, the fragment of the Eye of the Thunder Emperor has not yet completely recovered. It is hard to tell how much power it can unleash."

"Dealing with a Martial Grandmaster at the level of the Crimson Spirit Flag Master, An Instant's Thunder must be unleashed, giving him a good strike with a single all out burst of power."

As Yan Zhaoge flew, he observed their surroundings, "Also,

unlike at Clear Concealed Lake last time, in which I was hitting an inanimate object, able to hit it however I liked, even able to leisurely stroll over to place the fragment of the Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment at the core of the devilish domain, this time's target would be a live, moving person.”

“And it would also not be any living person. Martial Grandmasters at this level are highly vigilant, with a fast reaction speed, their speed also being fast. Not able to hit him in a single blow, my efforts would be wasted.”

As Yan Zhaoge said this, his figure abruptly halted in mid-air before ascending rapidly, avoiding another fire dragon shooting over from behind him.

The foreign dimension he was currently in was already extremely unstable, as gazing far into the distance, Yan Zhaoge could even see countless black lines appear in the horizon.

That was not a glow, and also not any real object.

It was as though a complete painting scroll had suddenly had cracks ripped in it.

The foreign dimension, had already begun marching towards destruction.

The sky became dark as even the flames formed of the Crimson Spirit Flag Master's true essence dimmed between the heavens and

the earth.

The wild wind howled unceasingly, blowing till even controlling the Immortal Crane Wings, Yan Zhaoge was a little unable to stabilise his figure.

The great earth below had begun quaking intensely, the rocks and mud on the ground shattering unceasingly, dense cracks spreading on it like spiderwebs.

Gazing over, Yan Zhaoge saw that the world before him resembled the illusion of an underwater city, many of the scenes before him actually beginning to distort and change form.

Chasing doggedly after Yan Zhaoge, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master could also feel that this foreign dimension was soon to be destroyed.

Having learnt that Yan Zhaoge was here, in having rushed here at extreme speeds, he had already steeled himself to take this risk, just wanting to kill Yan Zhaoge here.

As the destruction of this world hastened, with scenes of the end of the world playing out, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master could not help but quicken his pace, with each wave of attacks fiercer than the last as they shot towards Yan Zhaoge.

While he had a violent temperament, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master's attacks were not blind.

The flames spreading between the heavens and the earth unceasingly shrunk Yan Zhaoge's region of activity, gradually transforming into a massive cage of fire, wanting to trap Yan Zhaoge within.

The dense fiery light joined together, the area it enveloped growing greater and greater, obscuring the heavens and covering the earth, the scenes of the end of the world of this foreign dimension filled with violence and despair!

Yan Zhaoge's gaze was calm, but his expression appeared rather impatient as he wielded the Immortal Crane Wings to fly forward, his movements gradually losing their order a little as he seemed to be running out of options.

However, in the distance, a flickering door of light had already appeared within his field of vision in mid-air.

It was precisely the great door with which Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu had entered this foreign dimension as created by the spirit formation, currently still standing tall there.

However, as this foreign dimension walked towards destruction, this door of light also seemed a little unstable as it shook unceasingly like a reflection within water.

Seeing the door of light, Yan Zhaoge immediately sped towards it.

However, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master behind him had already drawn close at this moment as punching out, blazing flames directly enveloped Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge's pupils vaguely flashed with the purplish-green light of lightning.

With the glow of lightning bolstering his Immortal Crane Wings, his speed instantly raised by a level as he changed his direction at an extreme speed, barely managing to avoid the attack with great difficulty.

However, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master made use of this chance to fly past Yan Zhaoge, roiling waves of fire encircling that door of light.

Having first assured his own retreat route, he blocked Yan Zhaoge's path!

The Immortal Crane Wings on Yan Zhaoge's shoulders shook, numerous knifelike feathers of light hitting out towards the sea of fire like a tempestuous storm.

A cold laugh resounded from the Crimson Spirit Flag Master from within the sea of flames, blazing flames consuming the knifelike feathers of light as the jarring sound of metal on metal resounded.

A crimson-haired old man appeared within the flames, resembling a devil god possessing control over blazing fire.

Yan Zhaoge saw that old man glare over towards him as he laughed savagely, “Little worm, where can you fly to now?”

HSSB 243: Farewell, Old Crawling Worm!

This old man was the Crimson Spirit Flag Master. He looked at Yan Zhaoge as a tiger would its prey, a savage smile revealed at the corners of his mouth.

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master stood on the air before the illusory door, blocking Yan Zhaoge's and Ah Hu's path back to the Eight Extremities World.

At this moment, the foreign dimension was shaking unceasingly, the world even beginning to distort and change form, with end-of-the-world scenes of the heavens collapsing and the earth breaking apart playing out.

The heavens were truly collapsing and the earth breaking apart, as countless black illusory cracks were revealed within the sky, with the earth also similarly shattering into pieces.

Yan Zhaoge rose, avoiding a fiery light that swept towards him, arriving above the illusory door.

Lowering his head and gazing over, the illusory door was surrounded by a sea of flames.

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master smiled coldly as he raised his head to look at Yan Zhaoge. While in terms of position, Yan Zhaoge was currently at the greater height, the gaze with which the Crimson Spirit Flag Master was currently looking at Yan Zhaoge was as though he was looking down on him.

He didn't hurry to make a move now, as he solidly held the position where the illusory door was.

Because of Lin Zhou, there was more than just a single door to this foreign dimension. The Crimson Spirit Flag Master had entered through the rift that Lin Zhou had opened.

However, with the foreign dimension right on the brink of collapse, there was no time at all for Yan Zhaoze to change his mind and turn back, as he would have to travel through a great amount of space to the other door and to leave this foreign dimension through it.

The same principle applied for the Crimson Spirit Flag Master.

For both sides, either they left through this door, or they would accompany this foreign dimension into destruction, extinguished within this space.

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master smiled coldly, "Surnamed Yan, have you decided to die along with this foreign dimension, or to die at this old man's fists?"

He raised a hand, extending it forward as he clenched it into a fist.

Accompanied by this clenching motion, boundless blazing fire instantly surged, emanating outwards in all directions.

Looking at the Crimson Spirit Flag Master blocking the door below him, a smile was suddenly revealed on Yan Zhaoge's face, "Old Crawling Worm, you're wrong. It's your position that can generally be considered unfortunate."

One hand grabbing Ah Hu, Yan Zhaoge's other hand suddenly pulled out a short rod, about a foot long.

Looking at that stone rod, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master's heart abruptly skipped a beat as an ominous feeling suddenly welled up within his heart.

Yan Zhaoge smiled before moving the Immortal Crane Wings, speeding towards the Crimson Spirit Flag Master of his own accord.

Along with Yan Zhaoge's intentions, the stone rod within his hands instantly expanded, transforming into a massive, thick stone pillar!

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master was momentarily stunned as Yan Zhaoge stomped directly on the stone rod, which descended from above, smashing downwards towards him!

"Good little bastard!" The Crimson Spirit Flag Master roared in rage, not evading. If he evaded, it would be equivalent to giving Yan Zhaoge access to the illusory door.

The old man stood where he was, red hair resembling dancing blazing flames, his palm shooting out above his head, withstanding the massive stone pillar descending from the heavens.

His palm just having touched the stone pillar, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master felt a sinking sensation in his hands as he was almost unable to support its weight.

His figure that had originally been standing stably in mid-air was also rendered unstable, sinking uncontrollably downwards.

“So heavy?” The Crimson Spirit Flag Master was shocked.

His cultivation base was much higher than the Heavenly Connection Ah Hu previously, his strength also much greater, but he still felt immense pressure.

Whether it was the stone pillar’s mass or sturdiness, both of them far surpassed his predictions.

He had originally thought that he would be able to shatter the stone pillar with a single palm, also sending Yan Zhaoge flying, but the result was instead him being pressured downwards by it.

Also, that stone pillar also contained a unique suppressive force, such that even if the Crimson Spirit Flag Master wanted to dodge to the side at this time, he might not have what it took to move as per his intentions.

In the air below the stone pillar, time and space seemed to have been locked down, frozen into a single piece, solidly locking the Crimson Spirit Flag Master in place, only able to withstand it forcibly.

“I heard that this little bastard excavated some ancient remains in the Great Western Desert. Could it be this stone pillar?” The Crimson Spirit Flag Master suddenly remembered some rumours that he had heard before this, as he could help but curse inwardly, “Conniving scoundrel!”

He roared loudly, drawing on his true essence, an immense power erupting!

Only having descended less than a metre, The Crimson Spirit Flag Master achieved stability once more, standing on the air as though he was standing on the sturdiest earth.

At this moment, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master resembled a massive divinity that supported the heavens as he forcibly withstood the descending pillar, causing it to be unable to crush him.

As he exhaled with a sound, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master hit out with his other palm, landing mightily on the stone pillar. Slowly, his figure actually beginning to climb back up!

Laughing coldly, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master exerted force with his arms, wanting to throw Yan Zhaoge and the stone pillar out together.

Yan Zhaoge's expression didn't change as he instead smiled, neither hurried nor slow as he raised a foot that was standing on the stone pillar, before stomping down heavily!

The patterns on the surface of the stone pillar suddenly shone with radiance, transforming the entire stone pillar into a glowing ray of light!

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master immediately felt the pressure on him increase greatly. Not only did the weight of the stone pillar increase abruptly, that strange suppressive force suddenly grew more powerful as well.

At this time, let alone throw the stone pillar out, he was unable to even continue standing stably in mid-air as he was directly pressured downwards!

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master wanted to disperse the force and descend speedily to avoid the stone pillar before dodging to the side.

At this time, he couldn't be concerned about guarding the illusory door anymore.

But because of the suppressive force, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master discovered to his great despondence that not only had his surroundings been locked down, preventing his evasion, even the very air beneath him seemed like it had been frozen.

His entire person seemed to have been placed in a formless container, the only opening being above.

However, there was a heavy lid there that he was hard pressed to open, as he was pushed downwards unceasingly, the space available to him gradually shrinking further.

“What the hell thing exactly is this thing? Such a divine treasure was actually refined by a Martial Scholar?” The Crimson Spirit Flag Master seethed in anger as he was continually suppressed downwards by the stone pillar.

The roiling waves of fire were mostly extinguished at this moment, dissipating into the surrounding air.

As the Crimson Spirit Flag master continued to struggle against his descent, he naturally lacked the strength to continue blocking the illusory door.

The door of light appeared before Yan Zhaoge once more.

Not saying a word, Yan Zhaoge directly threw Ah Hu into the door of light.

At this time, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master below let out an enraged howl.

On him, a cloak of dark light abruptly appeared, radiance shining on its surface. It was a low-grade spirit artifact.

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master naturally had his own spirit artifact, but it had long since been destroyed in the process of fleeing all these years. His current low-grade spirit artifact had been snatched by him from someone else.

He was not very skilled in using it, but it was at least better than nothing.

Bolstered by the power of the spirit artifact, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master stopped his body from descending once more, as both sides momentarily found themselves once more in a stalemate.

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master could vaguely feel the suppressive power of the stone pillar weakening.

As Yan Zhaoge wielded the pillar of the Divine Palace, it was not like it was not taking a toll on him. Suppressing his enemies with the stone pillar could only be kept up for a limited period of time.

Grabbing this chance, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master's face abruptly turned red as he unleashed a forbidden art to stimulate his body, his power increasing by yet another level as he actually raised up the stone pillar!

However, the destruction of this foreign dimension had already reached its final phase.

The world was unceasingly ripped apart between the heavens and the earth, the surrounding space mostly having been consumed by darkness.

Soundlessly, the sky suddenly shattered completely, space breaking into two!

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master was greatly panicked. At this moment, the destruction of this foreign dimension was already right around the corner. If he did not leave now, he would be destined to perish alongside it.

The terrifying power of spatial collapse was such that even he would be completely helpless against it, doomed to be extinguished in an instant.

Just at this time, the pressure on him suddenly disappeared as the stone pillar shrunk rapidly, returning to its short rod form, kept within Yan Zhaoge's hands.

Raising his head, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master saw Yan Zhaoge standing by the door of light, raising his hand as he performed a strange action towards him.

Yan Zhaoge extended his right hand, raising his thumb, his index finger pointed straight at the Crimson Spirit Flag Master, the other three fingers curled as he performed a motion like the shooting of a gun, "Farewell, Old Crawling Worm."

In the air above Yan Zhaoge's head, the terrifying Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment exploded with the light of thunder!

HSSB 244: Wanting His Old Life!

The Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment transformed into a purple orb, flickering with the dazzling purplish-green light of thunder.

Standing by the door of light, Yan Zhaoge held the stone rod with one hand, making a shooting motion towards the Crimson Spirit Flag Master with the other.

His perked up right thumb went down abruptly, resembling one suffering the backlash of firing a shot as his index finger that represented the mouth of the gun was raised lightly.

Accompanied by this motion of Yan Zhaoge's, the Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment above him also flickered abruptly.

In that instant, it was though the emperor that reigned over all thunder lightly blinked.

Then, the foreign dimension in which scenes of the end of the world were playing out suddenly lit up with a thunderbolt that was filled with the aura of destruction.

The thunderbolt traversed straight through the air, instantly arriving before the Crimson Spirit Flag Master.

With the foreign dimension on the brink of collapse, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master was currently ignoring all else, fully focused on

rushing to the door of light.

He didn't have the leisure to care about Yan Zhaoge for the moment, only wishing to first leave this foreign dimension through that door before slowly taking care of Yan Zhaoge afterwards.

Even if he failed this time, there was still next time, next next time.

As an Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster, if he wanted to kill a Martial Scholar, there would surely be a chance.

However, just as the Crimson Spirit Flag Master was speeding rapidly towards the door of light, as Yan Zhaoge controlled the Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment, An Instant's Thunder instantly descended upon him!

An Instant's Thunder, burning all one's power in a single instant, concentrated in a single strike, with power that was violent to the extreme, even surpassing one's peak strength!

Staring his eyes wide, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master roared madly, his true essence surging as he punched out with his fists.

Thunder and blazing fire intermingled as they collided between the heavens and the earth, a massive explosion instantly occurring!

At other times, whether Yan Zhaoge's An Instant's Thunder

would be able to do anything to the Crimson Spirit Flag Master was still questionable.

However, at this critical moment, whether or not the Crimson Spirit Flag Master was able to take it or not, this would also be wanting his old life!

His momentum towards the door of light was forcibly terminated, as his entire person flew backwards!

The heavens and earth which had originally already been breaking apart shook mightily, completely shattering, the foreign dimension as well as everything in it all extinguished for good!

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master let out a despairing, unresigned howl of rage.

At this moment, he could only watch helplessly on as bit by bit, his fleshly body disintegrated within the air, seemingly slowly, but truly rapidly!

Unable to struggle, difficult to reverse!

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master glared furiously into the distance, where the flickering door of light was vanishing slowly.

Within the door of light, Yan Zhaoge kept the Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment as well as the pillar of the Divine Palace, the cloak of crane feathers hanging smoothly down from his

shoulders.

While his mind had weakened somewhat, Yan Zhaoge's current hairstyle was perfect and his clothes neat, resembling a handsome, elegant young master.

Yan Zhaoge smiled at the Crimson Spirit Flag Master, leisurely waving at him lightly alongside the foreign dimension's destruction, "More accurately, we will never meet again. Farewell, forever."

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master wanted to let out an enraged howl, but was already unable to utter a sound.

Even at this moment where he died, he found it incomprehensible how a lofty early Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster expert like him had actually died in the hands of a mere Martial Scholar!

While he had been suppressed by the stone pillar, just given a little bit more of time, Yan Zhaoge would have run out of strength, being suppressed by him instead.

While Yan Zhaoge possessed the Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment, what could truly prove a massive threat to him was but a single strike. If he handled it carefully, he might also be able to avoid getting struck by it.

While Yan Zhaoge had the Immortal Crane Wings, before him,

he could only use it to escape through the air. Given a little more time, he could still have blocked off Yan Zhaoge's path, rendering him unable to escape.

Clearly, his strength and cultivation base were superior by so much.

Clearly, despite Yan Zhaoge's many unique treasures, it was not like he had not had a chance.

Clearly, he had first snatched up the position where the door of light was.

Clearly, Yan Zhaoge did not have the strength and treasures to definitely be able to kill him...

However, the final result was him dying alongside this collapsed foreign dimension, extinguished along with this world!

Looking at the vanishing door along with Yan Zhaoge, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master was really, truly unresigned.

Knowing thyself but not thy enemy...

While Yan Zhaoge was currently already virtually famed under the entire heavens, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master suddenly discovered now that his understanding towards this young man was still limited.

Could it be that risking entering this soon-to-collapse foreign dimension in order to kill Yan Zhaoge, had been a mistake from the start?

Along with this final thought, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master was completely decimated within the air, an Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster dying just like that!

Travelling through the door of light, Yan Zhaoge felt pain like his body was being ripped apart, the feeling even more evident than the first time he had entered it, to get to the foreign dimension.

Exiting the door of light, re-entering the Eight Extremities World, Yan Zhaoge turned and looked back at the gradually vanishing door, smacking his lips, "This trip, really was..."

Consecutively wielding the pillar of the divine palace and the Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment had left Yan Zhaoge extremely weak, even weaker as compared to back at Clear Concealed Lake then.

However, he was still in a pretty good mood, as this trip into the foreign dimension left behind by Loose Practitioner He had been a successful one, with him seeing somewhat great gains.

Landing on the ground, Yan Zhaoge saw that jade coin which had activated the spirit formation completely shatter, turning directly into dust.

Ah Hu was waiting by the side, alongside Xu Fei who had remained on this side of the rift in order to watch over the spirit formation, as they both came up to him, “Everything okay?”

Yan Zhaoge snapped his fingers, smiling, “From this day on, I figure that we will not be seeing the Crimson Spirit Flag Master anymore.”

Ah Hu breathed in a breath of cold air, grinning happily and foolishly, just not knowing what to say.

Xu Fei also revealed a seldom seen surprised expression for a while before recovering, “Right, I should first hurry and get junior apprentice-sister Feng back.”

Re-entering the Eight Extremities World through the door of light, Ah Hu had briefly summarised the situation, and Xu Fei had sent Feng Yunsheng to immediately hurry to Broad Creed Mountain’s Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster closest to Suzhou City for assistance.

He himself had remained over at the spirit formation, preparing to reinforce Yan Zhaoge alongside Ah Hu. In the end, what they had seen was instead Yan Zhaoge strolling leisurely out of the door of light.

Now, even if the Crimson Spirit Flag Master was still alive, the foreign dimension had completely shattered and the door of light was also gone, with no possibility at all of him chasing

murderously over in pursuit. Naturally, Suzhou City would also not have to waste time looking for other Martial Grandmaster experts.

After being called back by Xu Fei and hearing of the situation, Feng Yunsheng's face was also filled with disbelief.

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master was an Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster, having already nurtured his own true martial spirit and refined his aura into essence.

While both Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmasters and Essence Spirit Martial Grandmasters were Martial Grandmasters, they were two completely different concepts altogether.

Seated in the meditative position, whilst moderating his condition and recovering his energy, Yan Zhaoge smiled, "It held the element of chance. At the end of the day, what killed the Crimson Spirit Flag Master was actually that foreign dimension. If not for it having collapsed, it would be hard for me to claim his life with my current methods."

"Having withstood a few waves of my attacks, I would then have been the one in trouble."

Xu Fei looked at Yan Zhaoge, "I heard about it from Huting. From the beginning, was it that you were planning to kill him by spatial collapse, even specially dragging things out before you returned over to this side?"

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “I am guilty that there was still some deviation in the plan, with the spatial collapse happening just that little later than I had predicted. In such a situation, the situation could change in the blink of an eye, and things nearly got out of hand. Luckily, I still succeeded in the end.”

Feng Yunsheng, Ah Hu and Xu Fei raised their heads in unison, “You really calculated it ah-is this sort of thing really something that can be calculated so precisely?”

HSSB 245: Returning In Glorious Victory!

Ah Hu looked at Yan Zhaoge with a face full of adulation, “Young Master, you really are too awesome. This was not like back then when that old scoundrel Yan Xu was heavily injured; the Crimson Spirit Flag Master just now was at his peak condition. Whatever methods you used, facing off alone against an early Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster and rendering him dead-you must be the first in history?”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, shaking his head, “Just like that time when Yan Xu was beaten half-dead by eldest apprentice-uncle, this time actually cannot count as well. If father captured that Crimson Spirit Flag Master alive and sealed his cultivation base before I slew him, it would still be me having rendered an early Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster dead, but would that be a thing to be proud of? Obviously not.”

Feng Yunsheng sent him a sidelong glance, “Pretend, continue to pretend, who knows how pleased with yourself you are feeling inside.”

Yan Zhaoge chuckled, not speaking.

Xu Fei also laughed, after which he patted Yan Zhaoge’s shoulders, “If you can avoid taking risks, it would still be best to do so. If something happened to you, little apprentice-uncle would be very sad.”

Hearing his words, Yan Zhaoge stopped smiling as he nodded,

“Senior apprentice-brother Xu speaks true.”

Faced with great danger in which the chances of survival were slim, this senior apprentice-brother Xu himself would continue talking and laughing naturally, his heart broad and without fear, but he still didn't wish to see his fellow disciples face such danger.

A sad look flashed across his face for a moment, as he had clearly thought of his Master Shi Tie and his pain of having to send off his descendants prematurely.

Xu Fei and Shi Tie were close as father and son, and he had viewed Shi Songtao as his true brother back then.

The incident that year had been the regret of Shi Tie's entire life, while similarly, Xu Fei had also been weighed down by it.

Looking at Xu Fei's expression, Yan Zhaoge knew that he was thinking of Shi Tie and his son again.

Looking at Xu Fei, Yan Zhaoge sighed, similarly falling silent.

While Ah Hu and Feng Yunsheng didn't understand Xu Fei like Yan Zhaoge did, they also stopped conversing happily at this moment.

Regathering his spirits, Xu Fei clapped his hands, smiling, “Speaking of which, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master should have been the strongest living expert of the Five Spirit Flags. With you,

Zhaoge, having killed him, while the Five Spirit Flags may not completely dissipate in the wind, it will be very hard for them to stir up any huge waves again. Zhaoge, you have performed a great merit for our Broad Creed Mountain once more.”

“It’s just a pity that it was a matter on an individual scale, lacking proof. It might be slightly harder for you to claim a reward for it.”

“However, if the Crimson Spirit Flag Master is not seen for the next few years and after, it would barely be able to count as proof.”

Xu Fei smiled at Yan Zhaoge, “But speaking of which, while killing the Crimson Spirit Flag Master is not a small achievement, it is incomparable to those great achievements of yours before this.”

“The clan is virtually running out of rewards to give you. A few years later, the merit of killing the Crimson Spirit Flag Master will probably mean nothing much to you.”

Yan Zhaoge waved his hands, “However small mosquitoes are, they’re still meat, right?”

Xu Fei pointed at Yan Zhaoge as he looked towards Feng Yunsheng, smiling, “Listen to him, listen to what he says. A lofty Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster becomes a mosquito in his mouth-what level of arrogance is this?”

“It is indeed junior apprentice-sister Feng who understands him

better. Just pretending to be humble in front of us; who knows how pleased he is with himself within his heart.”

Feng Yunsheng and Ah Hu both began laughing uproariously, Yan Zhaoge shrugging as he just smiled.

Having gotten rid of the Crimson Spirit Flag Master, it was actually fine whether or not the clan rewarded him for it. At the end of the day, it was still a matter that eased his heart.

With Yan Zhaoge’s rate of improvement, there would surely be a day where the Crimson Spirit Flag Master would cease to be a threat.

However, having an Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster always looking to him for revenge before this had not been a very comfortable feeling.

Moreover, this Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster was actually pretty realistic. The person whom he hated the most was Yan Zhaoge’s father, Yan Di.

However, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master would definitely be unable to defeat Yan Di. If he dared to appear before Yan Di, he would directly be put to death by him with a single slap.

Unable to beat the old one, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master changed his target to the young one, setting his eyes on Yan Zhaoge.

When Yan Zhaoge's strength had risen to the point that the Crimson Spirit Flag Master could no longer beat even him, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master would naturally no longer have come looking for Yan Zhaoge.

Instead, he would most likely have switched his focus to an even younger, weaker Broad Creed Mountain disciple.

Yan Zhaoge would naturally no longer have to be worried at that time, but at the end of the day, there would still be someone facing the threat of the Crimson Spirit Flag Master.

There was only being a thief for a thousand days-since when was there guarding against a thief for a thousand days?

Able to cleanly slaughter the Crimson Spirit Flag Master, putting a definite stop to future troubles, Yan Zhaoge was extremely satisfied, at what could be considered an unexpected gain.

And while an element of luck had been contained within, leaving the foreign dimension left behind by Loose Practitioner He this time, Yan Zhaoge had also had somewhat great gains.

After taking his leave of Xu Fei and Feng Yunsheng, Yan Zhaoge returned to his lodgings, beginning to inspect the many treasures that he had obtained this time.

First and foremost was naturally Yan Zhaoge's initial primary

target, the Life Illuminating Immortal Stone.

Yan Zhaoge had just know that Loose Practitioner He had one, not able to truly confirm beforehand whether it was really placed within that foreign dimension.

“Looks like my luck is still not bad,” Playing with that Life Illuminating Immortal Stone in his hands, a hint of a smile was revealed at the corners of Yan Zhaoge’s mouth.

Having obtained the Life Illuminating Immortal Stone, there would no longer be a need to seek out a substitute item.

After breaking through into the Heavenly Connection stage and accumulating and consolidating his foundation slightly, he would be able to begin attempting crossing through that heavenly gulf into the Martial Grandmaster realm.

Of course, ambitions were faraway things, and he should step firmly on the ground right beneath him, first achieving his breakthrough into the Heavenly Connection stage.

However, with Yan Zhaoge’s current foundation, the difficulty of that would not be high.

Other than the Life Illuminating Immortal Stone, there was still an expected surprise, naturally the unique treasure, the Immortal Crane Wings.

After having entangled with the Crimson Spirit Flag Master, its spiritual qi had been depleted very greatly, unable to be used for a time like the Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment.

However, nourished by its master Yan Zhaoge, when it had recovered its lost vitality, it would be able to display its true flair once more.

Along with that Life Illuminating Immortal Stone on that short table previously had been a few other things, all cleanly taken away by Yan Zhaoge.

Amongst them was a medicinal bottle, containing pills that Loose Practitioner He had previously concocted. However, with the ravages of time, all the way from before the time of the Great Calamity up till now, while some of these pills were still efficacious, the spiritual qi of some had already gradually dissipated completely over time.

Yan Zhaoge was not particularly concerned about this, as his attention was currently drawn by another object.

It was a scroll formed on a beastskin of who knows what beast.

Unfurling the scroll, Yan Zhaoge saw that it was completely empty, with only a square-shaped pattern right at the centre.

By the looks of it, this pattern should have been left behind by some kind of seal.

Looking carefully, Yan Zhaoge saw that that pattern resembled a sun.

The pattern appeared very ancient, but as Yan Zhaoge focused on it, he felt a piercing pain in his eyes, as though he was looking at the true sun itself.

This beastskin scroll was an object of Loose Practitioner He, left behind in the foreign dimension. Before Yan Zhaoge and Lin Zhou had entered today, it had always been lying there, being an artifact of before the Great Calamity, thus naturally having nothing to do with the current Sacred Sun Clan.

However, as Yan Zhaoge knew, the Sacred Sun Clan had similarly been formed on the foundation of unearthed remnants of the martial civilisation of before the Great Calamity alongside the comprehension and development of martial practitioners afterwards. Tracing it back, the Sacred Sun Clan still had some roots from before the Great Calamity.

Yan Zhaoge stroked his lower chin, “This seal might be related to that Divine Sun Scripture legacy of legend, though who knows how an imprint of it might have landed in Loose Practitioner He’s hands.”

HSSB 246: The Pyramid Of The Eight Extremities World

Fingering that beastskin scroll, Yan Zhaoge pondered for a moment, before pocketing it once more.

Afterwards, he began examining the various medicinal plants.

These medicinal plants had all been planted by Loose Practitioner He in the medicinal field behind the thatched hut in his foreign dimension. Over so many years, not having been tended to, some of these medicinal plants had also withered and died.

However, the ones which still remained even now were all precious spirit plants and medicines which had existed for a long time, also possessing powerful medicinal effects.

However, what made Yan Zhaoge the happiest was that many of these medicinal ingredients were ones that were already extinct in the Eight Extremities World following the descent of the Great Calamity.

Yan Zhaoge often sighed emotionally. It seemed that a skilled housewife is indeed hard pressed to cook a meal without rice. Currently, having obtained so many precious spirit medicines from Loose Practitioner He's old residence, he instantly felt like he had much more room to work with.

Carefully thinking back and considering, many thoughts of his

that had originally been unfeasible now had the possibility of being implemented in reality.

This especially caused Yan Zhaoge great joy.

After having settled the various spirit plants and medicines, Yan Zhaoge stretched himself lazily, finding himself in a rather good mood.

However, very quickly, the smile on Yan Zhaoge's face gradually faded, as his expression became a little stern.

He took out a black metal piece. Looking at it, his gaze gradually grew deep and distant.

This arched metal piece vaguely seemed to align with the lines on a person's face.

It was precisely that broken piece of mask that he had severed from that masked Martial Grandmaster with a single sword back in the foreign dimension previously!

Looking at that fragment of mask, Yan Zhaoge's expression was a little complicated as the scenes of that time played back ceaselessly within his mind.

At that time, he had only felt it to be familiar. Now, however, that person's features gradually came to match with that of a face from Yan Zhaoge's memories.

“How I hope I’ve recognised wrong...” Yan Zhaoge sighed, keeping the mask fragment once more.

After sitting silently in meditation for a time, Yan Zhaoge opened his eyes.

Ah Hu reported from outside, “Young Master, the Howling Wind Sword Sect’s Elder Jun is here.”

“Oh? Invite him in,” Yan Zhaoge stood up, pushing open the door and exiting.

A middle-aged man currently sat within the hall. Behind him were a few young men and women, with Jun Luo at their head.

Yan Zhaoge went up and bowed towards that middle-aged man, “Uncle Jun, you’ve returned to the Sand Region? I also just happen to be back from a journey, not knowing that you had come. Otherwise, it should definitely have been me going to pay you a visit.”

The middle-aged man before him was precisely Jun Luo’s father and a good friend of Yan Zhaoge’s father Yan Di, the Elder of the Howling Wind Sword Sect Jun Zhiyuan.

Like the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom Zhao Shicheng, Jun Zhiyuan was also a longtime friend of Yan Di’s, with the Yan Family and the Jun Family on extremely good terms.

What caused Yan Zhaoge some interest was that his father's old friends all seemed to be older than him.

Therefore, Yan Zhaoge had many older uncles, but no younger uncles at all.

Jun Zhiyuan smiled slightly, "I have come to thank Zhaoge for taking care of the little girl of my family. If not for you, Zhaoge, I fear that I would no longer be able to see her."

Standing behind Jun Zhiyuan, Jun Luo was looking down at the floor, behaving extremely meekly and obediently, appearing completely different from how she was like in private.

Yan Zhaoge said, "Uncle Jun overstates things. The matter of that youth of the Lian Family Fortress Lian Ying stemmed from remnants of Black Nightmare Mountain wanting to use him as a chess piece in order to enhance their assassination plan."

"Luo Luo is completely innocent, yet was swept into it. Naturally, I had to do my utmost to ensure her safety."

"While no danger ultimately befell her, I still feel very uneasy about it."

Hearing his words, Jun Zhiyuan shook his head, saying, "That was also you saving this child's life. Moreover, if not for you and those others of Broad Creed Mountain lending a helping hand,

trapped within a Black Nightmare Storm, the three of them would most likely have perished.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “Even ignoring the relationship between our two families, the Howling Wind Sword Sect is affiliated to my Broad Creed Mountain. Passing by and seeing them in crisis, lending a helping hand was only natural.”

While this was true, Jun Zhiyuan still got Jun Luo to go forward and solemnly thank Yan Zhaoge once more. Yan Zhaoge hurriedly stopped them.

Looking at those others behind Jun Zhiyuan and beside Jun Luo, Yan Zhaoge asked, “These are all Uncle Jun’s disciples?”

Jun Zhiyuan said, “That’s right; I brought them along with me this time to gain experience. Not having returned to the sect, I heard of Luo Luo’s incident, therefore brought them along with us.”

These young people all bowed towards Yan Zhaoge in unison.

While by seniority, they were of the same generation, with Yan Zhaoge taking Jun Zhiyuan as a senior and Jun Luo also behaving like a little sister before Yan Zhaoge, they couldn’t be careless.

While they all called him ‘Senior Brother Yan’, their forms of respects were all that of juniors.

Jun Zhiyuan had on an attitude like this was only natural.

If not for the relationship between the two families, he too would have to treat Yan Zhaoge like an equal, as did Elder Hong and Elder Bai of the Howling Wind Sword Sect.

Even while Yan Zhaoge was currently only around twenty years of age; even while Yan Zhaoge was still a Martial Scholar while they were all Martial Grandmasters.

Looking at the youths before him, Yan Zhaoge also felt momentarily emotional.

Actually, truly calculating age, these youths were already sixteen or seventeen. While they could not be considered similarly aged to him, they were definitely still of the same generation.

However, in terms of cultivation base, looking at them was sufficient to clearly distinguish the distance between a Sacred Ground-level power like Broad Creed Mountain and other powers.

The Howling Wind Sword Sect was already a first-rate power, also possessing a long history. Even when Black Nightmare Mountain had still ruled the Wind Domain, the Howling Wind Sword Sect had already been founded in the Sand Region, surviving all the way up till now.

As the one of the Howling Wind Sword Sect with the highest cultivation base apart from its old Chief, Jun Zhiyuan was

renowned for his teaching of his disciples.

His disciples, his daughter Luo Luo included, were basically the elite of the Howling Wind Sword Sect's younger generation, all of them outstanding figures of the younger generation of the entire Sand Region's first-rate powers.

However, comparing them with similarly aged disciples of Sacred Grounds like Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan, they were clearly inferior in terms of strength.

When placed in Broad Creed Mountain, the most brilliant disciples of the Howling Wind Sword Sect's younger generation would immediately seem completely unremarkable amongst the similarly aged disciples there, their genius haloes completely gone, and they would likely find it very hard not to be at the bottom.

Of course, this was also due to Broad Creed Mountain absorbing brilliant geniuses in its various lands in great numbers. Being under Broad Creed Mountain's rule, the Sand Region's seedlings with the most potential would definitely be taken in by Broad Creed Mountain, who was given the foremost priority in doing so.

Powers like the Howling Wind Sword Sect were left to pick out generals from the shorties.

It was not like Broad Creed Mountain would completely net all of them, but people climbed to where power lay as water flowed to low-lying areas. The most brilliant geniuses would definitely yearn to join Broad Creed Mountain.

There were only those occasional geniuses who lacked knowledge and had not heard of Broad Creed Mountain's great name, having been overlooked by Broad Creed Mountain, who would be obtained by first rate-powers like the Howling Wind Sword Sect. That would be like having picked up a treasure.

Very naturally, the pick order started from the strongest and ended with the weakest. Broad Creed Mountain would have the first pick, first-rate powers like the Howling Wind Sword Sect followed and then came second-rate powers like the Lian Family Fortress and the Yellow Wind Mountain Manor.

While the martial civilisation was currently still in the midst of redevelopment, the pyramid of the Eight Extremities World had already taken form.

HSSB 247: Stepping Into The Heavenly Connection Stage!

Being born into a second-rate power, Lian Cheng and Lian Ying would naturally have a lower cultivation base than even Jun Zhiyuan's disciples, who were part of the Howling Wind Sword Sect.

For them, they didn't even dream of being accepted into Broad Creed Mountain as a disciple. Rather, they hoped to be accepted into the Howling Wind Sword Sect.

The Lian Family of course hoped to find a worthy successor among its younger generation, but even more so hoped that they could produce talented disciples who would be able to join first-rate powers.

As a result, when trying to influence the local powers, the twisting intrigue that existed behind the scenes could only be imagined.

But this was also to be expected given the circumstances. Just like in the Eastern Tang and the Scarlet Rainbow Sect, these first-rate powers would always hope to have genius descendants that could be nurtured by Broad Creed Mountain.

Indeed, the grandson of the current Chief of the Howling Wind Sword Sect was a Broad Creed Mountain disciple. Yan Zhaoge had also seen him several times and had been asked by Elder Jun to keep an eye on him.

This system was also beneficial for Broad Creed Mountain since it helped them strengthen their control over their subordinates.

Likewise, the Sacred Sun Clan, Infinite Boundless Mountain, and the other five Sacred Grounds all engaged in the same practice.

Even in these subservient regions for powers like the second-rate Yellow Wind Manor, there would naturally be even weaker forces under them.

Speaking from experience, the number of these weaker forces was even higher.

The Eight Extremities World had a culture that emphasized strength. Looking downwards, between local martial arts halls, small sects, and small clans, these existences were as numerous as the hairs on a cow.

From second-rate powers downwards, martial practitioners born into these kinds of circumstances had to continuously step upwards into a broader world lest they become part of the faceless crowd.

Practicing martial arts was a way of life in the Eight Extremities World. Beyond exploring the martial dao, it was more for protecting oneself. Beyond that, it was a livelihood.

“Uncle, I guess you have already heard of the situation at the

Clear Concealed Lake.” Yan Zhaoge continued, “Nine Underworlds Evil Devils and Flame Devils are both enemies of the entire human race. The fallen practitioners of the Decimating Abyss Organization want to force the Nine Underworlds to descend. The entire Eight Extremities World must be guarded against them.”

Jun Zhiyuan nodded. “This is natural. After hearing the news about Clear Concealed Lake, our sect took many precautions to prevent being infiltrated by spies from the Decimating Abyss Organization.”

Yan Zhaoge spoke out. “Thank you for your hard work. I’ll have to trouble Uncle Jun this time.”

The devilish will was best at magnifying one’s negative emotions, especially evil thoughts, desires, and obsessions.

Compared to martial practitioners from the six Sacred Grounds, solitary practitioners like the Ghost Hatchet Elder Han Sheng who were dissatisfied with the lofty position of the Sacred Grounds were much more likely to be recruited by the Decimating Abyss Organization. Their thoughts went along the lines of ‘without destruction there can be no growth.’ They wanted to switch the heavens and change the earth.

Actually, from a certain point of view the stratified society of Sacred Grounds, first-rate powers, and second-rate powers suffered from that exact problem.

All of these lower tier powers wanted to replace an existing

Sacred Ground. Wanted to become the new Sacred Ground. Wanted to attain absolute power and status.

Thoughts along these lines, regardless of whether they spawned schemes or unyielding resolve, were all inroads for the Decimating Abyss Organization.

Of course, this kind of thinking was not representative of everyone in the Decimating Abyss Organization. Neither did it represent a certainty of succumbing to an inner devil.

It all depended on each person's individual willpower, intelligence, and power.

But one could not exclude the pessimistic possibility that some first-rate and second-rate powers would definitely be corroded by the influence of the Decimating Abyss Organization.

From Yan Zhaoge's perspective, he actually felt that it was perfectly natural for these first and second-rate powers to harbor such feelings.

Martial practitioners, even more than ordinary people, would have strong feelings of pride and arrogance. Martial practitioners like the original shameless and cowardly Liu Shengfeng were a far smaller minority.

For martial practitioners who attained a certain degree of success, how many would be willing to settle for a life of

mediocrity?

When their own strength became insufficient, and they recognized the reality of things, those who were willing to swear allegiance to another power for a lifetime were in the minority.

The difficulty of pressing on with only their own ability meant that seeking the help of external forces was also perfectly understandable.

However, the external force they turned to had to be scrutinized.

For example, turning to existences like the Nine Underworlds or the Flame Devils would be absolutely taboo.

The majority of cultivators, regardless of their scheming and planning to rise, would reject the Nine Underworlds and the Flame Devils.

After all, these were foreign powers that ate humans, drank human blood, and hoped to wipe out the human race. The devils also completely deviated from the human race, in addition to being the sworn public enemies of all humanity. Throwing in with their lot was something most people would reject.

However, there would always be a small number of people who would be able to ignore this and give in to the temptation. A large portion of the Decimating Abyss Organization members were like this.

Compared to the violent and bloodthirsty Flame Devils, the Nine Underworlds Evil Devils were far more deceptive and also harder to guard against.

Even though Yan Zhaoge and Elder Jun were just chatting, they still had to discuss this subject.

Knowing that the remnants of Black Nightmare Mountain had thrown in their lot with the Decimating Abyss Organization and that they mostly existed in the Wind Domain, it was clear that there were storm clouds on the horizon.

“Uncle Jun still doesn’t intend to assume the mantle of Chief?” Before Elder Jun left, Yan Zhaoge spoke in a calm and collected manner. “Now that the situation is becoming chaotic, a strong leader at the helm will do much to protect the sect in the upcoming stormy waters.”

Hearing what was said, Jun Zhiyuan lightly frowned as he pondered the other’s words.

He had no desire to engage in a power struggle, but with regards to his Howling Wind Sword Sect, he felt great affection and concern.

As he was seeing Jun Zhiyuan off, Yan Zhaoge clasped his hands behind his back and looked off into the distance. Jun Zhiyuan hesitated a moment as he rethought his previous decision, giving Yan Zhaoge peace of mind.

Rather, if Jun Zhiyuan had steadfastly persisted in his original decision, then Yan Zhaoge would truly be worried.

In fact, it could be said that if Jun Zhiyuan changed his mind and competed for the position of Chief, causing Elder Hong and Elder Bai to be worried, it would not upset Yan Zhaoge in the slightest.

Apart from receiving Elder Jun, Yan Zhaoge refused to admit any other visitors.

Besides Yan Zhaoge, Xu Fei and the other experts from Broad Creed Mountain seemed to be peacefully relaxing. In reality, they were closely monitoring every dip of the sandbank, every gust of wind, and every movement of the grass.

Bidding farewell to Elder Jun, Yan Zhaoge went into secluded cultivation again.

His goal in this time's seclusion was to break through from the late stage Xiantian realm into Heavenly Connection realm.

Refining the body to the fullest, communicating with the heavens, and transcending mortality.

These three stages were respectively the pinnacles of the Body Refinement realm, Martial Scholar realm, and Martial Grandmaster realm.

These were the peaks, and also the boundaries of each realm. This also meant that most martial practitioners would begin to make extensive preparations in order to prepare to cross over the incomparable gulf that separated the different realms.

Yan Zhaoge was now about to step onto the first peak and experience even greater sceneries.

Time flowed like water as the hustle and bustle outside filtered into the quiet of the room.

One night, Yan Zhaoge sat as usual with his eyes closed, almost as if he was going to sleep.

An illusory light rose from the top of his head and suddenly solidified into reality.

As Yan Zhaoge opened his eyes, the dark and silent room suddenly lit up as if it was daytime.

At this moment, Yan Zhaoge successfully stepped into the Heavenly Connection stage.

Showing a faint smile, Yan Zhaoge stood up and pushed open the door.

Coincidentally, Ah Hu just so happened to step into the courtyard at this time. Looking at Yan Zhaoge, Ah Hu froze a moment before cracking an enormous grin and laughing. “Young Master, double

happiness indeed.”

HSSB 248: Double Happiness

Yan Zhaoge did not hide the spiritual light above his head. With just a single look, Ah Hu could tell that the spiritual light connecting to the heavens and the earth had already turned from illusory to real, signifying that Yan Zhaoge had officially stepped into the tenth and final stage of the Martial Scholar realm, the Heavenly Connection stage.

“Double happiness?” Yan Zhaoge looked at Ah Hu, knowing that one of these referred to his stepping into the Heavenly Connection stage, not knowing what the other referred to.

Ah Hu smiled happily, “Young Master, news has come over from Broad Creed Mountain that the Family Head has already finished concocting the Heaven Returning Divine Pill that you discovered.”

Hearing his words, Yan Zhaoge also felt pleasantly surprised, “Oh, that was fast.”

Concocting the Heaven Returning Divine Pill was rather difficult. The pill had to be returned to the furnace nine times, and every single refinement took quite a lot of time.

With even a single mistake, the medicinal ingredients would all be rendered useless, and one would have to start all over.

While Yan Zhaoge had confidence in Yan Di’s cultivation base as well as attainments in alchemy, he had been prepared for it to take longer.

With good news having come over so quickly, it was also somewhat out of his expectations.

After silently calculating the time that had elapsed, Yan Zhaoge laughed, “Good fella; father succeeded with it in a single go.”

Ah Hu gave a simple and honest laugh, “I’m not too sure of that, but Family Head has indeed sent over the good news, saying that you can rest half your heart now.”

Yan Zhaoge raised his head slightly, murmuring to himself as he looked into the dark night sky, “Right, I can indeed rest half my heart.”

With the Heaven Returning Divine Pill having been successfully concocted, Yan Zhaoge was at least ninety percent confident that his Grand Master Yuan Zhengfeng would be able to recover from the old injuries that had been plaguing him all these years.

This way, with Yuan Zhengfeng’s solid foundation and outstanding talent, for him to take that final half-step that he had been stuck at for so long, Transcending Mortality and entering Sainthood, stepping into the Martial Saint realm, was really a sure thing.

Yuan Zhengfeng had already been waiting for this day for so many years.

While there were no absolutes in this world, with the strength and potential that Yuan Zhengfeng displayed, if not for his old injuries holding him back, he should have long ago achieved Sainthood.

If Yuan Zhengfeng successfully achieved Sainthood, Broad Creed Mountain which originally already possessed the Sacred Artifact, the Clear Qi Robe, would see its power directly skyrocket.

Even if the Sacred Sun Clan's East Rising Martial Saint Huang Guanglie also improved further, this would at most return things to their current equilibrium. While there would still be pressure on Broad Creed Mountain, the situation wouldn't get any worse.

Because Yan Zhaoge had pulled Infinite Boundless Mountain into their tripartite alliance, the situation would be even better than it had been a few years ago.

For it to be said that Yan Zhaoge could currently only rest half his heart, with the other half still tense, it was because there still existed some potential for change in the future.

If Yuan Zhengfeng really recovered from his old injuries with the help of the Heaven Returning Divine Pill, while he could assault the bottleneck heading into the Martial Saint realm, there was still a process that had to be gone through, with some time needed before he could truly achieve Sainthood.

This time when Yuan Zhengfeng remained in secluded cultivation would be a great trial for Broad Creed Mountain.

As long as nothing changed dramatically it would be fine. At most, Broad Creed Mountain would just temporarily shrink its defence perimeter and focus fully on defence.

But if during this time that Yuan Zhengfeng was in secluded cultivation, the Sacred Sun Clan's Huang Guanglie just happened to leave seclusion, the situation would be very disadvantageous for Broad Creed Mountain.

Especially if Huang Guanglie successfully improved a step further as he emerged from seclusion, in which case disadvantageous would be insufficient to describe the situation with regard to Broad Creed Mountain.

Within this, risk still existed alongside opportunity.

However, having successfully concocted the Heaven Returning Divine Pill, it would give Broad Creed Mountain and Yuan Zhengfeng a higher chance of succeeding.

Thinking of this, Yan Zhaoge gave a mental thumbs up to his father.

With the Heaven Returning Divine Pill having successfully been concocted in a single attempt, much time had been saved. This was also equivalent to allowing Yuan Zhengfeng more time to prepare before attempting his breakthrough.

The time saved undeniably held great significance in terms of war potential, not simply being only a matter of the pill concoction itself.

Yan Zhaoge nodded repeatedly, “Not bad, not bad. Indeed double happiness, and compared to it, this happiness of my own doesn’t even count as much anymore.”

Now, Yan Zhaoge looked at Ah Hu, “By the way, how’s Pan-Pan?”

Ah Hu gave a simple and honest laugh, “That guy’s been raised chubby and healthy by you, and is about to level up again very soon. If he can successfully deploy the power of fire and water, I believe that his improvements will be great.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded satisfiedly, “Pay more attention to him. Whatever’s good about this fat mound, there are two problems with him. Other than loving to eat, it’s his laziness. If you don’t press him, he’ll definitely slack.”

While he was somewhat different from the giant pandas of Yan Zhaoge’s memories, as long as Pan-Pan could sit, he wouldn’t stand, and as long as he could lie down, he wouldn’t sit; his laziness had truly reached a realm of its own.

Giant pandas usually seemed lazy, not loving to move. However, that was because they mainly ate bamboo. With their nutrient intake being very low, they did not like to move in order to preserve their stamina.

As for Pan-Pan, while he also loved eating bamboo, that was because he liked its taste. In truth, most of the things he ate were metals that were rich in spiritual qi.

Therefore, with him being such a lazy beast, despite the fact that he had no lack of good food, Yan Zhaoge felt very speechless at him.

Not mentioning Pan-Pan, after successfully stepping into the Heavenly Connection stage, Yan Zhaoge did not relax in his efforts, and instead began to move towards even higher heights.

Finding the Life Illuminating Immortal Stone earlier had been in preparation for his breakthrough into the Martial Grandmaster realm after having stepped into the Heavenly Connection stage.

However, before finally taking that step, Yan Zhaoge still required some amount of accumulation, solidifying his foundation further.

Those of the outside world only saw Yan Zhaoge progressing rapidly, his cultivation speed extremely shocking, yet most overlooked the fact that each of Yan Zhaoge's steps were actually taken very stably and not lightly at all.

A minute on the stage, ten years behind the scenes.

Behind the scenes of the countless times that he shone dazzlingly before others, Yan Zhaoge's diligence in cultivation exceeded most

others.

Of those whom Yan Zhaoge often saw, even training maniacs like Shi Tie and Feng Yunsheng might not be as hardcore as him.

As Yan Zhaoge cultivated, time was also gradually passing by.

One day, Xu Fei suddenly appeared at Yan Zhaoge's dwelling.

Yan Zhaoge opened the door in greeting, seeing Xu Fei standing calmly there. The first thing Xu Fei said upon seeing him was, "The Decimating Abyss is moving."

"Where?" Yan Zhaoge didn't waste his words, cutting to the chase.

Not wasting any time, the two set off shoulder to shoulder, Xu Fei saying as they walked, "Yunwu, the Wang Family."

Yan Zhaoge nodded, and sighed.

His initial worries had not been unfounded.

The Wang Family of Yunwu in the Sand Region was a longtime Family of the Wind Domain, its history even longer than that of the Howling Wind Sword Sect.

Like the Howling Wind Sword Sect, Yunwu's Wang family was a first-rate power within the Sand Region. They controlled a great amount of territory there and had quite a number of second-rate powers and some even smaller families and clans affiliated with it.

While the Wang Family was also subordinate to Broad Creed Mountain, from the looks of it now, a considerable number of those of the Wang Family were dissatisfied with the current situation.

Having the six great Sacred Grounds above them greatly limited the space for first-rate powers like the Wang Family to continue rising upwards.

No one was actually truly at fault in this matter. Everyone strived for higher and better, but the peak was of limited size. If the people below wanted to go up, the only way to do so was to knock someone else down.

It was this rule of the world that had given the Decimating Abyss and the Nine Underworlds some chances to strike.

This day, clouds surged and gales howled in Yunwu County of the Wind Domain's Sand Region.

HSSB 249: As A Father

Yunwu County was the ancestral ground of the Wang Family. Other than the Yunwu County, the Wang Family controlled a vast amount of surrounding territory.

The regions governed by the Wang Family neighboured those governed by the Howling Wind Sword Sect. Both were also bordered by the Great Western Desert, putting them rather close to Suzhou City.

Sending Yan Zhaoge, Feng Yunsheng and Ah Hu to the city gates of Suzhou City, Xu Fei said, “As the current Acting Elder of Suzhou City, possessing responsibilities here, I cannot accompany you this time. Be careful and stay safe.”

Yan Zhaoge lightly punched Xu Fei’s shoulder, “Rest easy, senior apprentice-brother Xu. We will pay attention; you just stay here and keep wary. The enemy may be outwardly targeting one place but actually aiming for another.”

Leaving Suzhou City, they rushed to the regions governed by the Wang Family.

Feng Yunsheng had specifically come to temper her blade as also sitting on Pan-Pan, she asked Yan Zhaoge, “If fallen practitioners appear, nothing naturally needs to be said, but what about those who harbour devilish intent but have yet to fall to the dark side?”

Ah Hu instantly also looked at Yan Zhaoge, whose figure bobbed

slightly alongside Pan-Pan's hurrying.

Yan Zhaoge said mildly, "Wanting to cause chaos, the Decimating Abyss will mostly likely be aiming for the same thing as that time at Clear Concealed Lake, setting up a Devilish Domain Grand Formation and inducing the descent of the Nine Underworlds."

"Whether or not they have completely fallen, as long as they are opening the path for the Nine Underworlds, kill them. If our letting people off instead leads to the opening of the Nine Underworlds, the Evil Devils definitely won't show us the same kindness."

Yan Zhaoge gazed into the distance, "The power of the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss to corrupt human hearts is too strong. If someone who is proficient in concealing his or her emotions does not fall, it would be very hard to tell. This precisely corroborates an old adage-you can know people's faces, but you can never know their hearts."

"Although we've been unceasingly investigating and cleaning up recently, with it having been effective to some extent, no one can guarantee that we have completely removed all the spies, especially those higher echelon experts."

Yan Zhaoge knits his brows, his gaze rather gloomy, "While it is not nice to say, it must be noted that the higher the cultivation base of a martial practitioner, the more undetectable it would be should devilish intents arise within that martial practitioner's heart, because they are generally much better at controlling themselves, with it very hard for bystanders to tell their

authenticity.”

“Such people have firm wills, and would normally not fall to the dark side easily, but so long as devilish intent is born within their hearts, the more deeply rooted as well as stubborn they would be.”

Ah Hu and Feng Yunsheng both nodded, the latter saying softly, “The worst case scenario would be like that time at Clear Concealed Lake, with the enemy already fully aware of our preparations and arrangements. The Wang Family may just be an illusory lance or a trap.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “That’s right. Therefore, we have to raise our vigilance and promptly adapt and deal with the situation at hand as soon as we discover that something is wrong.”

Ah Hu shook his head from side to side, “The Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss are really too troublesome in that regard.”

Yan Zhaoge said mildly, “There’s no ways about it. We can’t just grab every eyebrow and beard and suspect and maintain surveillance on every single person. That would not just keep everyone tense and afraid, it might very possibly also lead to countless false reports surfacing, with people being framed. At that time, the Decimating Abyss would be the happy ones.”

“We just have to stabilise our footing, moving as planned. After all, most people reject the Evil Devils and the Nine Underworlds. At the end of the day, it is just a few who are bewitched by the

devils and have devilish intent arise within their hearts.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “What is most critical is that we maintain stable footing, and have absolutely dependable experts holding the fort.”

Ah Hu grinned, “Elder Shi is one of these.”

For the incident in the Wind Domain this time, Broad Creed Mountain had planned beforehand for the bigwig to specifically rush over to the Wind Domain to deal with this matter to be Yan Zhaoge’s senior apprentice-uncle, the ‘Iron Lion King’ Shi Tie.

Yan Zhaoge nodded, sighing, “Yes.”

Proceeding along the way, they very quickly neared Yunwu County.

Following the given instructions, Yan Zhaoge came to a barren hill.

At the top of the hill stood a person with a great frame that resembled a tall mountain. It was precisely Shi Tie.

“Zhaoge, you’re here.” Shi Tie didn’t look back, gazing far into the distance, at an oasis which was precisely the ancestral ground of the Wang Family.

The Wang Family had a foundation in Yunwu City, but its true

core was still this oasis.

Gazing over now, black smoke that rose to the heavens could already be seen, gradually dyeing the sky above the oasis black.

Amidst the roiling black clouds, bloodred lightning flickered, mournful and terrifying.

Yan Zhaoge raised his head and looked at the gradually expanding black clouds, and the bloodred lightning amidst the cloud layer. It was like he had returned to that time at Clear Concealed Lake.

Shi Tie gazed at the distant oasis. Looking at his back, Yan Zhaoge's gaze was a little complicated.

"Zhaoge, you have something you want to say to me?" Shi Tie did not turn as he instead suddenly asked Yan Zhaoge via sound transmission.

Hesitating slightly for a moment, Yan Zhaoge then said candidly, "Currently, it is only my personal suspicion, and has yet to be confirmed. With a great battle currently at hand, I don't want to say it, lest it disturb eldest apprentice-uncle's mind."

Shi Tie's voice halted for a moment, before it resounded once more, "There are not many things which can disturb my mind. Either it concerns the safety of Broad Creed Mountain, or..."

Yan Zhaoge sighed softly, pondering slightly before he said, “I still can’t say for sure, but senior apprentice-brother Shi, Shi Songtao, may still be alive today.”

Shi Tie’s breathing stopped slightly as he replied after a moment’s silence, “Did you see him somewhere?”

Yan Zhaoge said softly, “It was in my earlier report that in the Devilish Domain Grand Formation at Clear Concealed Lake, someone ambushed me and senior apprentice-brother Xu.”

“In that foreign dimension left behind by Loose Practitioner He of before the Great Calamity, I was attacked by that same person once more. In the process of fighting him, I sliced off a portion of his mask, with part of his face being revealed. I am unable to say for certain, but...”

Shi Tie was silent for a time before he asked, “Is there still any other proof?”

Yan Zhaoge answered, “The martial art that person cultivated in was the Dark Light Killing Art, but it could be seen that it was not something he had always been cultivating in, and rather had been learnt as a supplement.”

“He is already somewhat proficient in his Dark Light Killing Art, but according to my calculations, he should have only been cultivating in it for a few years, slightly less than the time senior apprentice-brother Shi has been missing.”

Shi Tie asked, “I remember you said that he was an early Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster?”

Yan Zhaoge answered, “Right. When senior apprentice-brother Shi vanished, he was in the Heavenly Connection stage. With his talent and potential, if he was not stuck at the Heavenly Connection stage bottleneck for too long, he should already be in the mid Spirit Vessel stage. Therefore, I still hold some doubt.”

“No,” Shi Tie said slowly, “Adding in time required to recuperate from his injuries, and the time lost due to beginning to cultivate in other martial arts, the early Spirit Vessel stage is more possible.”

At these words, there was nothing that Yan Zhaoge could say.

After a long time, he replied in a low tone, “I’m sorry, eldest apprentice-uncle.”

Closing his eyes, Shi Tie said slowly, “No, you did right. Letting me be prepared for it beforehand-it’s a little better.”

“I really hope that you, Zhaoge, mistook that person’s identity. However, if he truly is Songtao, it is also something that I must bear.”

“At the end of the day, I, am not a passable father.”

HSSB 250: Momentum Like Breaking Bamboo

Looking at the unspeaking Shi Tie, Yan Zhaoge also fell silent, sighing soundlessly.

The interaction between the two was wholly conducted via sound transmission, with outsiders not privy to their contents.

Standing behind Yan Zhaoge, Feng Yunsheng was a little nonplussed.

Their eldest apprentice-uncle Shi Tie who always resembled a mountain peak that seemed able to support the very heavens-even she could see that he was a little despondent at this time.

As though the towering mountain had been dyed the colour of twilight by the setting sun.

However, very quickly, Shi Tie reopened his eyes.

And with the opening of his eyes it was like the sleeping lion had awoken, the previous despondence completely gone without a trace, the person standing before them still that domineering, mighty Iron Lion King.

Looking at this scene, Feng Yunsheng even felt that what she had seen earlier had completely been an illusion.

Looking at the ancestral ground of the Wang Family in the distance, Shi Tie said calmly, “Do not let the Devilish Domain Grand Formation be set up-directly destroy it.”

“I will launch a sudden assault while you sweep inwards from the outside, leaving people to guard the outskirts, keeping vigilant for anything that might suddenly occur.”

His voice was not however loud, also not spreading far into the distance, but all the Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners in the vicinity could hear it clearly, feeling a firm determination emanating from that heavy, deep voice.

Yan Zhaoge and the others agreed in unison. Having finished speaking, Shi Tie rose up from the peak of the hill.

A clear brilliance emanated from the inside of his body, his entire person resembling a divinity cast of Vajra.

The next moment, Shi Tie strode forward, the world exploding with light as the black devilish atmosphere was instantly hindered from expanding.

Accompanied by Shi Tie’s one stride, he was already directly in the air above the Wang Family’s ancestral ground.

Pressured by that firm and condensed power that was vigorous to the extreme, the air above the Wang Family’s ancestral ground

instantly lit up with countless patterns, forming a massive defensive formation in mid-air, attempting to resist that strong pressure.

However, it was like something made of porcelain had met a sturdy rock, virtually unable to hinder it in the slightest as it began to shatter mightily.

Shi Tie's body was not fast, but as he landed stably, it was like there was nothing which could obstruct his footsteps.

At the very least, the grand formation of the Wang Family's ancestral ground was absolutely unable to do so.

Whatever power it was, they diligently accumulated great power where their foundations lay, giving themselves a powerful home advantage.

Relying on the grand formation of their ancestral ground, even if Broad Creed Mountain's First Seat Elder in the Sand Region arrived, the Wang Family's experts would be able to withstand him for a moment.

While their formation would still be broken through, it was not like they would have absolutely no chance to retaliate.

Sadly, the grand formation that was able to obstruct the Sand Region's First Seat Elder of the early Essence Talisman stage was no different from paper before the late Essence Talisman stage Shi

Tie.

Just at this time, a venomous voice resounded from amidst the roiling black fog, “Iron Lion King!”

Countless spirit talismans that flickered with black light now rose from the Wang Family’s ancestral ground, rapidly assembling in mid-air to form a profound and mysterious spirit formation that emanated a terrifying air.

Connected to one another, the spirit arrays instantly formed a tall tower that resembled an altar.

On the altar, an indistinct figure could be seen, wielding a long black lance as he struck out towards Shi Tie.

It was, shockingly, another expert of the late Essence Talisman stage, a peak Martial Grandmaster expert who had already established an Essence Talisman Heavenly Altar.

Shi Tie’s face was expressionless, resembling tough, eternally unchanging granite, “Scaly Dragon King Sima Chui. You have also joined the Nine Underworlds?”

The other party stabbed out with his black lance, resembling a scaly dragon soaring up to the heavens as a deafening roar resounded, black light shining as a black wound seemed to be carved out between the heavens and the earth.

Shi Tie's expression did not change in the slightest as his body was enveloped by a spirit altar transparent as glass that emanated a feeling of indestructability.

He punched out domineeringly, directly meeting his opponent's lance.

An intense collision occurred. From far away, Yan Zhaoge and the others, not drawing near, could feel the very heavens and earth they were in actually trembling with the impact.

Feng Yunsheng's eyes let out a strange light, "I've heard of the famed name of the Scaly Dragon King Sima Chui. He is one of the few peak experts amongst solitary practitioners, at the ninth level of the Martial Grandmaster realm, with a late Essence Talisman cultivation base, one of the few of solitary practitioners of the late Essence Talisman stage who possesses a high-grade spirit artifact."

"That black lance of his is his high-grade spirit artifact. Eldest apprentice-uncle actually forcibly took that martial practitioner of the same cultivation level wielding a high-grade spirit artifact head-on."

The higher the cultivation base, not only did the surpassing of levels to defeat stronger enemies grow rarer, the gap between martial practitioners of the same cultivation level was generally also smaller.

Of those who were able to attain such a stage, how many of them would be easy to deal with.

In a battle between Essence Talisman Martial Grandmaster experts of the same cultivation level, the addition of a high-grade spirit artifact was usually sufficient to decide the victor.

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “Otherwise, why would he be called the Iron Ling King? Attack and defence all in one ah.”

As Shi Tie gazed coldly at his opponent, the belt around his waist lit up as his high-grade spirit artifact, the Profound Light Divine Armour was activated, countless streams of black light instantly transforming into an armour, enveloping Shi Tie’s body.

The power of Shi Tie’s spirit artifact merged with his martial intent, causing his power to instantly skyrocket, his punch directly sending the Scaly Dragon King Sima Chui into retreat.

After his punch, Shi Tie did not rush off in pursuit, instantly stomping downwards heavily.

With a great boom, the grand formation defending the Wang Family’s ancestral ground completely collapsed.

His expression vicious, Sima Chui changed his stance as his lance transformed into streaks of black light that moved between the heavens and the earth, not clashing head-on with Shi Tie but rather adopting a harassing method.

While Sima Chui was inferior to Shi Tie, he could at least prevent

Shi Tie from continuing to approach the ancestral ground of the Wang Family down below.

The oasis where the Wang Family's ancestral ground was situated was once again enveloped by black fog, flashing with numerous streaks of red lightning.

Within the depths of the black fog, a massive spirit formation could vaguely be seen.

Yan Zhaoge once again felt the terrifying, soul-shaking air that he had felt back at Clear Concealed Lake, that of the Great Nine Underworlds Door preparing to descend.

“Let's go,” Yan Zhaoge said, his figure quick as flashing lightning as he rushed towards the Wang Family ancestral ground, Feng Yunsheng and Pan-Pan following closely behind him.

From various directions, martial practitioners of Broad Creed Mountain appeared, individually led by Martial Grandmaster experts as they moved together to surround the Wang Family ancestral ground.

Spreading his Immortal Crane Wings, Yan Zhaoge's speed was great as he soon arrived at the outskirts of the Wang Family ancestral ground.

The grand formation defending the area had already been destroyed by Shi Tie, with the people within only able to use foot

soldiers to withstand the Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners.

After they neared, countless dark glows instantly appeared within the black fog, resembling the coming of a tempestuous storm.

Everyone employed various methods in defence.

Yan Zhaoge's footsteps did not halt at all as the feathers on both sides of his shoulders, their tips aimed ahead, shot directly towards the enemy like an unforgiving, pelting rain.

The faint gold feathers and the dark light collided unceasingly in mid-air.

Numerous feathers of light shattered and dissipated in mid-air, while numerous iron arrows of dark light distorted and changed form, raining down in bits and pieces on the ground below.

Those few that slipped out of the net were forcibly withstood with the Lofty Mountain Armour.

Yan Zhaoge strode forwards in huge strides, arriving before the grand manor at the Wang Family ancestral ground. He kicked out, a large opening directly collapsing in the walls of the manor.

HSSB 251: If You're Not A Martial Grandmaster, Don't Come To Die

Yan Zhaoge directly kicked out an opening in the side of the Wang Family's ancestral manor.

As dust and smoke flew, sabre-light suddenly flickered, chopping out towards Yan Zhaoge.

The sabre-light resembled a continuous chain of mountains, with strange and perilous peaks, numerous layers of sabre-light instantly surrounding Yan Zhaoge.

Not even looking at it, Yan Zhaoge punched out, bursting through the sabre-light as he instantly sent his opponent flying.

Although his opponent flew backwards, the sabre-light before him grew as more enemies, all using the Continuous Mountains Sabre Art passed down within the Wang Family, obscured the heavens and covered the earth as they bore down on Yan Zhaoge.

At the same time, amongst these sabre-lights that resembled lofty mountains, a dark, biting wind also assaulted Yan Zhaoge.

Black Nightmare Mountain's direct lineage martial art, Pursuing Wind Sword Style!

The sword was named Pursuing Wind, being even faster than

wind itself, one of the fastest swords under the heavens, able to rival the Lightning Mantra Seventy Two Swords of the Heavenly Thunder Hall's direct lineage.

It cast a dim sword-light, concealed amongst all those sabre-lights, exerted later but arriving first, that people would be hard pressed to guard against.

Yan Zhaoge just reached out with a single hand, closing the gap between his thumb and index finger, gripping the sword of his opponent.

Immediately, the sword-light was extinguished, the wind formed by the sword dying down, the sword, gripped by Yan Zhaoge's two fingers, completely unable to move.

At the same time, Yan Zhaoge's aura-qi surged. Standing there, not moving an inch, his vigorous aura-qi transformed into a storm, directly dissipating the sabre-lights descending towards him that obscured the heavens and covered the earth.

The reaction of that Black Nightmare Mountain martial practitioner before Yan Zhaoge was also extremely fast, immediately abandoning his sword as it was caught by Yan Zhaoge.

However, whether it was switching his stance and attacking or immediately retreating, without even having time to perform his next movement, he suddenly discovered his sword, with the blade facing away, bearing down towards him, its original owner!

“Rip!” As if it were the sharpest point, the bladeless hilt broke through the aura-qi that guarded this Black Nightmare Mountain martial practitioner’s body, and pierced directly into his chest.

Everyone nearby looked at Yan Zhaoge, shocked. Gripping the blade of the sword with two fingers, he had pushed it forward lightly, using the sword hilt as a blade as he directly stabbed that Black Nightmare Mountain martial practitioner to death.

His expression as per usual, Yan Zhaoge retracted his arm, drawing the sword hilt out of his opponent’s chest.

Not even switching his stance, just holding onto the blade of the sword with two fingers like this, as though wanting to commit suicide, Yan Zhaoge used the sword hilt as a sword blade casually as he liked. However, it was already superior to the swords of most Martial Scholars under the heavens as he slew all the martial practitioners in the vicinity.

Breaking through another wall, Yan Zhaoge entered the centre of the courtyard, instantly slaying a great many more people, clearing out another area. Other than him, no other live soul remained.

His gaze not rippling in the slightest, Yan Zhaoge abruptly threw the sword within his hands to the side, with it instantly transforming into a sword-light that resembled a bolt of lightning.

Within the black fog, a martial practitioner who had originally been approaching stealthily under the cover of darkness was

directly pinned to death on the ground by this sword.

The other side's Martial Scholars experts were also approaching rapidly, prepared to seal this point of breakthrough as created by Yan Zhaoge.

Directly slamming a late Xiantian Martial Scholar to death with his palm, Yan Zhaoge shook his head, "If you're not a Martial Grandmaster, don't come to die."

As he said this, he swivelled his body, raising his palm and directly locking an incoming fist.

This person had a face that resembled a horse, the aura-qi around his body surging. Above his head, like Yan Zhaoge, was a spiritual light that shot straight into the heavens, not an illusory light but true radiance. It was a peak Martial Scholar who had stepped into the Heavenly Connection stage.

The newcomer appeared to still be rather young, with him not being much older than thirty. As he circulated his aura-qi, countless black winds were formed, as he was clearly of Black Nightmare Mountain's direct lineage.

His eyes were yellowed and bloodshot, having already fallen to the dark side. Glaring at Yan Zhaoge, his eyes were filled with resentment and hatred.

"People from Broad Creed Mountain, all deserve to die!"

This horse-face man shouted, his entire body's aura-qi surging madly as it formed an illusory heaven and earth, filled completely with black hurricanes.

The terrifying black hurricanes shrunk and condensed unceasingly, finally transforming into numerous tangible black lances, directed straight at Yan Zhaoge.

However, Yan Zhaoge's acupoints pulsed, countless streams of clear qi emanating outwards, majestic as the heavens.

As the opponent's black hurricanes that resembled lances landed within, they directly vanished.

At the same time, grabbing onto his opponent's fist, a terrifying aura-qi was abruptly released from Yan Zhaoge's palm.

That horse-faced man could only feel aura-qi like numerous fire dragons immediately flowing into his body through the meridians of his arm, as the pain of incineration befell him.

Numerous fire dragons rushed within his body, his body's aura-qi completely unable to withstand it.

In that instant, the horse-faced man's body blazed within, his flesh and blood, bones, muscles, internal organs and meridians that been tempered countless times exploding one by one.

The horse-faced man's body stiffened where he stood, a strange red appearing on his face, arms and the other parts of his body that were not covered by his clothes.

Like a crab, being cooked till ripe.

Yan Zhaoge released his hands, this horse-face man's body falling limply to the ground like a clump of rotten mud.

“Being able to reach the Heavenly Connection stage at this age-in Sacred Grounds, he would be at the level of direct disciples,” Yan Zhaoge shook his head, “In its current dismal condition, Black Nightmare Mountain was still able to recruit such a genius as a disciple-it is a rare thing indeed. Sadly, he joined the Nine Underworlds.”

Having rushed over with the Immortal Crane Wings, Yan Zhaoge's speed had been extremely fast. It was only now that Ah Hu and the others arrived.

Just having arrived, Ah Hu's claw penetrated through the crown of an opponent's head.

In other areas of the manor, Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners were also breaking their way in unceasingly, killing their way to the depths of the manor.

Broad Creed Mountain had long since been prepared for this operation, having deployed an elite force here, the momentum of

their attacks hard to withstand.

Let alone the martial practitioners of the Wang Family, even the Decimating Abyss martial practitioners with remnants of Black Nightmare Mountain at their head were hard pressed to stand against Broad Creed Mountain's offensive.

Rather than the opponents before them, it was instead the aftershocks of the fight of Shi Tie and Sima Chu overhead that Yan Zhaoge and the others were more vigilant of, lest they were swept over by the tail of the typhoon, dying without knowing what hit them.

However, Shi Tie held the upper hand, beating Sima Chui into retreat, the latter hard pressed to parry his blows. Able to control the battle situation, Shi Tie was doing his best to provide space for Yan Zhaoge and the others.

Additionally, the devilish air was getting denser and denser. At the same time that it brought harm, it also blocked the aftershocks of the fight between the two Essence Talisman Martial Grandmasters.

This enabled Yan Zhaoge and the others to rest their hearts and directly and courageously rush towards the core of the Devilish Domain Grand Formation.

Having experienced that incident at Clear Concealed Lake, Yan Zhaoge was even more familiar with Devilish Domain Grand Formations now, as he proceeded straight on.

The grand formation before their eyes had yet to be completely formed, with the devilish domain yet to be completely established.

While Yan Zhaoge and the others had their movements affected by it, they were still smooth.

There was only that terrifying air that threw people's hearts into disarray that was gradually growing stronger, influencing their minds.

Yan Zhaoge felt that whilst rushing forward and slaying his enemies, the killing intent within his heart was strengthening unceasingly, with there seemingly being a voice within his heart telling him to kill all lifeforms that stood before him, regardless of their identities.

"Hmph," Yan Zhaoge's gaze deepened as he stabilised his mind once more.

Raising his head and gazing over, he saw that not far away stood a familiar-looking golden tower, a red door of light at its peak, currently projecting a silhouette on the ground below.

Yan Zhaoge leapt, rushing towards the tall golden tower, resembling a great roc spreading its wings as he spread his arms wide, a number of perfectly good heads sent flying as his sword-aura rushed past.

HSSB 252: Too Successful

In terms of cultivation base, of the assaulting Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners, Yan Zhaoge wasn't the strongest.

However, in terms of understanding of the Devilish Domain Grand Formation before them, no one could match him.

As they proceeded, Yan Zhaoge was the person who neared the central golden tower at the centre of the Devilish Domain Grand Formation the fastest.

At this moment, red light flickered on the golden tower, forming a door of light, its silhouette projected on the ground below.

Countless spirit patterns that resembled black chains coiled around the golden tower, the spirit patterns extending towards the surrounding devilish qi.

However, as Shi Tie had said, they could destroy the Devilish Domain Grand Formation without it having fully formed.

Yan Zhaoge and the others arrived extremely quickly, when the Devilish Domain Grand Formation had just been set up, still yet to truly circulate.

The golden tower and the countless spirit patterns that were wound around it still appeared illusory and ethereal, not yet having completely solidified. Even that door formed of red light

still appeared extremely weak. While a silhouette was projected below, it was still in its embryonic form.

However, as time passed, that terrifying aura which bewitched people's hearts that originated from the Nine Underworlds grew stronger and stronger.

Yan Zhaoge rushed towards the tall tower, accompanied by Feng Yunsheng, Ah Hu, Pan-Pan as well as some other Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners.

At this moment, Feng Yunsheng had already dismounted from Pan-Pan, a lustreless, jet-black, sabre grasped firmly within her hands.

She brandished her sabre, a fallen practitioner quickly perishing as she made her move.

In the distance, an opponent carried a massive wheel, close to two metres in diameter.

The perimeter of the wheel was covered with bent sharp blades, resembling teeth.

The other party roared, his aura-qi shaking as he lifted this wheel and threw it towards Feng Yunsheng and the others!

That wheel spun, the sharp blades having seemingly vanished, with only shining golden light visible on the perimeter of the

wheel. Suddenly, the entire wheel grew explosively, becoming even more fearsome and terrifying.

The massive wheel spun as it pressured over with a shocking momentum, wanting to hack apart the bodies of the ten over people there in one shot!

The other Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners hurriedly avoided it.

One of them, whose cultivation base was higher than Feng Yunsheng's, leapt up, his toes precisely tapping on the centre of that wheel.

His vision, analytical power and speed were all exquisite to the extreme as he successfully leapt over the wheel, heading straight for that big man who had thrown it.

Having evaded the enemy's attack in a single move, those who saw it couldn't help but cheer.

Feng Yunsheng, however, seemed dazed as she remained where she was, unmoving.

Just as someone was about to let out a startled cry, Feng Yunsheng abruptly raised the black sabre within her hands!

The next moment, her sabre descended!

A piercing grinding noise resounded before the wheel suddenly split into two, flying out by Feng Yunsheng's sides far into the distance before smashing onto the ground.

Having struck out with her sabre, Feng Yunsheng tapped lightly with her feet, her entire person rising into the air before descending like a meteor!

She was instantly before an opponent, her violent, sharp strikes with the momentum of breaking bamboo as she hacked straight down from overhead, directly splitting an opponent right into two, right down the middle!

Such a domineering attack from a beautiful maiden-the great contrast caused everyone to look twice.

With her sabre having descended, having slain this enemy, Feng Yunsheng didn't seem any concerned about it in the least.

As though it was only natural, she spun, rushing towards a next opponent with no hesitation at all.

Following closely behind Feng Yunsheng, while he was currently more powerful than Feng Yunsheng, as Pan-Pan saw this, he blinked repeatedly, unconsciously shrinking his thick neck.

The others followed closely behind, Yan Zhaoge acting as the tip of the blade for those who could keep up with him, unceasingly

advancing at the front, in charge of opening the way.

Spying enemies ahead, the Immortal Crane Wings on Yan Zhaoge's shoulders instantly flipped, transforming into two wings, the feathers on it resembling blades as they shot out, enveloping a great area as they pierced the enemies ahead with hundreds and thousands of holes.

As they gradually approached the tall tower at the centre of the Devilish Domain Grand Formation, their surroundings grew more distorted and violent. This was already about to form an independent space of all-encompassing red light, turning the surroundings into an independent world of red.

Yan Zhaoge raised his head to look at those countless black spirit patterns that resembled black chains overhead, before he leapt up.

A short stone rod appeared within his hands, growing instantly as it immediately transformed into the massive pillar of the Divine Palace.

Yan Zhaoge raised the stone pillar till it was above where the intercrossing spirit patterns were. Relaxing his hands, the stone pillar smashed downwards.

Below, numerous spirit patterns instantly broke apart one after another!

Within all these spirit patterns collapsing, the originally still

unstable golden tower was also shaken as it began to tremble.

The surrounding red light between the heavens and the earth instantly vanished, even the devilish qi dissipating greatly.

The power of the Devilish Domain Grand Formation suddenly weakened, the other Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners still killing their way in instantly speeding up, killing over in a straight line.

Especially those few groups led by Essence Spirit Martial Grandmasters, they killed their way over to the core of the grand formation with the momentum of breaking bamboo.

Standing on the pillar of the divine palace, having broken numerous spirit patterns and still yet to land on the ground, Yan Zhaoge suddenly felt the light above his head dim.

Raising his head, he saw an old man brandishing his sabre, attacking towards him. As the sabre descended, it was as though a great chain of numerous mountains was collapsing!

His majestic true essence, having turned from illusory into real, actually truly formed innumerable rocks of mountains, descending towards Yan Zhaoge with the momentum of mountains collapsing.

An Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster, the Head of the Wang Family!

Yan Zhaoge's expression did not change, the light of thunder surging within his right eye, the Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment in the form of a purple orb appearing.

With a great rumbling sound of thunder, purplish-green light surged, splitting the mountain rocks before him apart.

The Head of the Wang Family still wanted to attack, but the wind next to his ears whistled past as a terrifying sabre-light that seemed almost able to break through space itself hacked towards him!

Of Broad Creed Mountain's direct lineage martial arts, one of the Eight Extreme Arts, the Chaotic Elements Uniting Sabre!

An Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster of Broad Creed Mountain had arrived!

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly. This time, it was not just he himself who had come here to the core of the formation.

Raising the pillar of the divine palace, Yan Zhaoge switched his position, smashing apart some more spirit patterns, with the Devilish Domain Grand Formation continuing to deteriorate, that golden pagoda beginning to seem like it was teetering on the brink of collapse, the red door of light looking like it was soon going to be extinguished.

The Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners beginning to

gain more and more of the upper hand, with victory already in sight.

In the air above the Wang Family ancestral ground, the ‘Scaly Dragon King’ Sima Chui was pressured by Shi Tie to the point of his feet unable to touch the ground, only able to barely move around and keep Shi Tie locked in combat.

After smashing spirit patterns once more, Yan Zhaoge stopped, jumping to the top of the pillar of the Divine Palace whereupon he gazed at that tall golden tower.

Standing beside the thick stone pillar, Ah Hu looked up at him, “Young Master, what is it?”

“Something’s a little off,” Yan Zhaoge narrowed his eyes, “It’s been too successful...”

Ah Hu scratched his head, “Perhaps because Broad Creed Mountain no longer has spies of the Decimating Abyss within, with them not knowing of our plans, thus collapsing in a single blow?”

Yan Zhaoge surveyed the surroundings, “The Decimating Abyss martial practitioners here at the core of the formation are mostly martial practitioners of the Wang Family, with Black Nightmare Mountain Martial Grandmasters not visible anywhere. The elites of Black Nightmare Mountain here actually only consists of the Heavenly Connection Martial Scholar I slew outside.”

Ah Hu was shocked, “There’s an ambush, wanting to surround us instead?”

Yan Zhaoge shook his head, “Our clan has experts keeping vigilant watch at the outskirts, with the First Seat Elder of the Sand Region also specifically keeping an eye on the place. Wanting to come to surround us instead would not be such an easy thing.”

As he pondered, Yan Zhaoge’s gaze fell on that tall golden tower once more.

HSSB 253: The Abnormal Yan Zhaoge

“In this battle, the enemy experts were also few. Other than the ‘Scaly Dragon King’ Sima Chui, there were no other Essence Talisman Martial Grandmasters,” Gazing at that golden tower, Yan Zhaoge fell into deep thought.

Ah Hu grinned, “Even if there is an ambush, destroying this Devilish Domain Grand Formation first definitely won’t be wrong. At the end of the day, we definitely can’t let the Nine Underworlds descend here, right?”

“And by destroying the Devilish Domain Grand Formation, the enemies will also lose their geographical advantage.”

Yan Zhaoge did not answer. Surveying their surroundings, looking at those intermingling spirit patterns, he began projecting as he analysed them unceasingly within his heart.

After the incident of Clear Concealed Lake, Yan Zhaoge had learnt from the experience and truly clenched his teeth and put in some vicious effort on the dao of formations.

Because of time constraints, it was not like heaven-shaking, earth-overturning changes could be seen, but he had still made visibly great progress in the area.

“At the root of it, this Devilish Domain Grand Formation’s final goal is the descent of the Nine Underworlds, being a formation that breaks through the boundaries of time and space,” Yan

Zhaoge pondered, “So, if one wanted to play some tricks, would it also be in the area of time and space?”

“Reversing the direction of the door, sending us from the Eight Extremities World to the Nine Underworlds? Doesn’t seem like it...”

Yan Zhaoge unceasingly pondered on principles of formations, countless thoughts flashing through his mind at lightning speed.

While he and Ah Hu had halted, the other Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners did not show any signs of ceasing in their attack.

An Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster chopped out with an Eight Sceneries Spirit Sabre, true essence transforming into eight screens of light, enveloping that tall golden tower.

The next moment, the eight screens of light shattered together, as the tall golden tower that had been teetering on the brink of collapse now began to collapse for real.

Yan Zhaoge diligently felt the collapsing golden tower and the changes in the Devilish Domain Grand Formation.

Suddenly, Yan Zhaoge detected where the problem lay.

The Devilish Domain Grand Formation, in its previous circulation, had not been any different at all from the one that he

had destroyed back at Clear Concealed Lake.

However, having begun to circulate in reverse and collapse, some minute differences became visible.

The golden tower collapsed, the red door of light completely extinguished, the black spirit patterns that resembled countless black chains directly snapping.

Dense black devilish qi now flowed in reverse into the bodies of the fallen practitioners here, causing them to feel pain worse than death.

Everything, everything just seemed so similar to before, as though it was a re-enactment of the scenes at Clear Concealed Lake then.

Only one thing was different!

Accompanied by the collapse of the tall golden tower, Yan Zhaoge could vaguely feel that the power of this Devilish Domain Grand Formation seemed to be secretly guided elsewhere!

Suddenly raising his head, not having any time for words, Yan Zhaoge leapt off the pillar of the divine palace, bringing it along as he rushed towards the currently collapsing golden tower.

Seeing Yan Zhaoge lifting the massive stone pillar as he rushed towards the golden tower, the other Broad Creed Mountain martial

practitioners were all slightly taken aback, “The formation’s core is already about to be destroyed. What is he doing, being greedy for merit?”

“But if one were to talk about being greedy for merit, so many of us can see it. You also led the charge in breaking the formation, helping everyone to force their way in here. Whatever the case, you won’t be lacking in the foremost merit ah!”

The Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster closest to the golden tower was also looking perplexedly towards Yan Zhaoge, his brows knit slightly, “Zhaoge, no need to worry. That sabre blow of mine can ensure the destruction of this golden tower...”

Not waiting for him to finish, Yan Zhaoge hurriedly cut off his words, “Elder Cong, first secure this pagoda-don’t let it collapse!”

As the words left his mouth, everyone was left gaping and tongue-tied.

Even the fallen practitioners and the other martial practitioners of the Decimating Abyss who still remained were stunned on the spot, unable to recover as they just stared at Yan Zhaoge.

Even in his wildest dreams would Elder Cong never have thought that such words would actually suddenly come from Yan Zhaoge.

He looked confusedly at Yan Zhaoge, “What exactly...”

Halfway through his words, wariness suddenly flashed through Elder Cong's eyes as he appraised Yan Zhaoge all over, examining him closely.

He had thought of a possibility. While he felt that this possibility was really ludicrous, it also couldn't rival Yan Zhaoge's abnormal behaviour now that made him seem like a completely different person.

Fallen to the dark side!

The other Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners also looked rather doubtfully at Yan Zhaoge.

If one were to say that Yan Zhaoge had fallen to the dark side, they wouldn't believe it. First not speaking of Yan Zhaoge having prevented the descent of the Nine Underworlds in the incident of Clear Concealed Lake, in this time's breaking through of the Devilish Domain Grand Formation at the Wang Family ancestral ground, Yan Zhaoge had also played a pivotal role.

If one were to speak of a Martial Scholar of the Eight Extremities World whom the Decimating Abyss and the Nine Underworlds would be the happiest to be rid of, if Yan Zhaoge claimed to be the second, no one would dare claim to be the first.

Such a person falling to the dark side was truly unbelievable.

However, Yan Zhaoge's abnormal actions were truly had to

understand.

Unless in the breaking of the formation earlier, the devilish intent within his heart had been stirred up on the spot?

The Nine Underworlds was adept in infiltrating the hearts of humans. No one would know when they might suddenly be hit by it, only able to stay vigilant at all times.

The golden pagoda had already completely fragmented, collapsing downwards as it was soon to turn into a huge pile of rubble.

Not having the time to explain, Yan Zhaoge leapt into the air, the pillar of the Divine Pillar descending as it forcibly stabilised the fragmented tall golden tower.

Luckily, his usual fame and performances had left too deep an impression in peoples' hearts. While they all harboured doubts, no one stopped him in the end.

Yan Zhaoge stabilised the tall golden tower, his expression still grave as he focused his mind, unceasingly sorting through formation principles within his head.

Seeing Yan Zhaoge completely not having the leisure to speak, Ah Hu hurriedly came up, saying, "Elder Cong, Young Master feels that this raid has been too successful, fearing that it may be a trap."

On hearing his words, Elder Cong nodded, “Yes, I have this feeling too. Still, whether or not it is an ambush or something else, we still can’t let the Nine Underworlds descend. Destroying the Devilish Domain Grand Formation first will definitely not be a mistake. After all, at the end of the day, whatever their plan, the enemy’s goal is still the descent of the Nine Underworlds.”

“And as soon as the Great Nine Underworlds Door opens, the consequences would be unimaginably catastrophic. No scenario, however terrible, could be worse than that.”

Hearing his words, the other few Broad Creed Mountain Martial Grandmaster experts all nodded in agreement.

Yan Zhaoge finally finished sorting out the changes in the formation as he now spoke, “The Nine Underworlds descending here is indeed an extremely terrible scenario, but it is not the worst one.”

Elder Cong and the others were stunned slightly as Yan Zhaoge sucked in a deep breath, raising his head to look into the distance, “If the Nine Underworlds descended here, at least we would be prepared for battle. Especially with eldest apprentice-uncle here. Even if the Great Nine Underworlds Door truly opened here, we could still put our lives on the line, obstructing and slaying the Evil Devils, buying time for reinforcements of our clan and the evacuation of the ordinary citizens here.”

“However, what if a Great Nine Underworlds Door suddenly

appears in another place without any prior warning at all, at a place that we are totally unprepared for, allowing for the descent of the Nine Underworlds?”

All the Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners here were shocked.

Whether it was back at Clear Concealed Lake or here at the Wang Family ancestral ground, a very important reason that they were able to obstruct the descent of the Nine Underworlds was that a process and some time was still required for the Devilish Domain Grand Formation to be established and the Great Nine Underworlds Door to open.

At the same time, the establishment of the grand formation also required time and treasures, and signs could also be detected of this. It was possible for it to be detected before the grand formation had been established sufficiently.

This gave the martial practitioners of the Eight Extremities World the chance to destroy it.

However, if in some place, without any prior warning whatsoever, not requiring any process at all, a Great Nine Underworlds Door suddenly appeared?

Just thinking about it gave everyone here the chills.

HSSB 254: Reversal!

Yan Zhaoge's words caused all the Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners here to feel cold.

Staring at his opponent, that Broad Creed Mountain Martial Grandmaster who was fighting against the Head of the Wang Family yelled, "Is that the case?"

The Head of the Wang Family looked momentarily at a loss before he recovered, some resentment and viciousness flashing through his eyes.

They had been made use of, becoming bait and cannon fodder used to draw Broad Creed Mountain in.

However, this old man very quickly retracted his emotions, incomprehension on his face as he rather hurriedly snorted, "I have no idea what you are saying."

While his reaction was fast, the minute changes in his gaze were all seen by the Broad Creed Mountain Martial Grandmaster, observing him carefully.

The heart of this Elder of Broad Creed Mountain instantly grew cold, sending his opponent into retreat with his sabre as he turned and shook his head towards them, "I'm afraid it's real!"

Elder Cong and the others all sucked in a breath of cold air as

they simultaneously looked at that already fragmented tall golden tower.

Having jumped off the pillar of the Divine Palace, Yan Zhaoge was standing on the wreckage of the collapsed golden tower, his palm extended, placed on its surface as he diligently analysed the changes of circulation in devilish qi within.

After a while, Yan Zhaoge said rather gravely, “It’s a little late. The reversal of the grand formation has already begun, with a great amount of devilish qi being transported into the distance. My current suppression can only delay this process.”

Elder Cong’s expression turned dark, as he felt just like slapping himself.

A Broad Creed Mountain Martial Grandmaster let out a low shout in the distance, “Senior apprentice-brother Cong, stabilise your mind. Regret is also a form of stubbornness, and can give the devils a point to infiltrate.”

Saying thus, he looked towards Yan Zhaoge, “Can you determine where the new Great Nine Underworlds door will open?”

Yan Zhaoge closed his eyes, opening them again after a bit as he said in a heavy tone, “South Heaven Region.”

All the Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners here felt bitterness within their hearts.

The South Heaven Region, due to directly facing the Fire Domain's Sacred Sun Clan, contained a great many elites of Broad Creed Mountain.

Other than the Central Heaven Region where Broad Creed Mountain's headquarters lay, of the other six Regions, the North, South, East and West Heaven Regions as well as the Sand Region and the Gan Region, the First Seat Elder of the South Heaven Region was the strongest.

However, it was also precisely to guard and stand off against the Sacred Sun Clan that many experts of Broad Creed Mountain, the First Seat Elder of the South Heaven Region included, were often stationed at the border of the South Heaven Region, lying between the Heaven and Fire Domains.

Broad Creed Mountain's arrangements in the South Heaven Region was against the south and not the north, because to the north was precisely the Central Heaven Region.

This led to the internal defence of the South Heaven Region being extremely weak, as opposed to its southern border.

If the core lands of the South Heaven Region suddenly had a rift open within, with the Nine Underworlds descending, great damage would surely be inflicted, with Broad Creed Mountain's forces unable to react in time.

Especially when the Sacred Sun Clan's movements would also

have to be put into consideration.

Reinforcements from the Central Heaven Region, due to time being extremely tight, would be very hard pressed to make it in time.

Clinging on to that final hope, someone asked Yan Zhaoge, “If the enemy truly had such arrangements, why did they have to wait till we entered their trap? Couldn’t they have destroyed the core of the devilish formation here of their own accord, therefore changing the place in which the Great Nine Underworlds Door would open?”

“I too wish that I were wrong. However, I’m not,” Yan Zhaoge shook his head, “Whether it is fallen practitioners or those who hold devilish intent, they are unable to damage the core of a Devilish Domain Grand Formation. Therefore, they could only set up this formation, making use of us to help them complete their plans.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled a little, “At this critical moment, it is instead a dumb method that makes it possible to accurately pinpoint whether someone bears devilish intent-the method would work every time.”

At this time, Yan Zhaoge could still converse and joke with relative ease. Everyone here, regardless of cultivation base, admired his bearing and manner.

It was only that most were unable to laugh like Yan Zhaoge.

Elder Cong shook his head forcefully, forcing himself to calm down, hacking an enemy flying with an Eight Sceneries Spirit Sabre, “Immediately inform Elder Shi, as well as our clan and the South Heaven Region. We will first exterminate the remaining Decimating Abyss martial practitioners here.”

Seeing this, the Head of the Wang Family finally began laughing madly, “Even if I die here today, seeing your Broad Creed Mountain in such a state, this old man will also not have died for nothing. Hahahaha!”

The expressions on the faces of Elder Cong and the others were all very ugly.

The other party had dug a pit for them to jump into, but they had had no choice but to jump into it.

Destroying the Devilish Domain Grand Formation here, preventing the Nine Underworlds from descending in Yunwu County, a Great Nine Underworlds Door would instead instantly open someplace else.

Not destroying the Devilish Domain Grand Formation here, would they just sit here and watch the Nine Underworlds descend here before their very eyes?

While it was said that the former was more dangerous, the latter also wasn't any good at all.

Having worked so hard for this, in the end having to choose between bad and worse, choosing either one would not make them feel good at all.

His face bitter, Ah Hu looked at Yan Zhaoge, “Young Master.”

His hand still pressed on that golden wreckage, Yan Zhaoge murmured, “The Decimating Abyss has an expert ah. Within such a short period of time, actually making such fine, intricate alterations to the Devilish Domain Grand Formation that opens the Great Nine Underworlds Door. I just don’t know if they can accurately determine the exact place in which the Great Nine Underworlds Door will open.”

“If it opens at random, okay. But if it could open exactly where they wanted, that would truly be a rare thing indeed.”

Yan Zhaoge’s mind fell deep within the devilish formation, the scenes before his eyes changing as piercing mournful cries that resembled wailing from the deep abyss resounded by his ears. Finally, it stopped at the scene of a plain of the South Heaven Region.

It was vast, flat earth with the crop-cultivating fields of farmers everywhere, also being near several densely populated large cities.

A large river flowed past, nourishing the fields on both sides of the shore, making for a rich scene.

On seeing this scene, Yan Zhaoge fell silent.

He could virtually already see the tragedy of this place transforming into hell on earth following the descent of the Nine Underworlds.

Within the air, the black devilish qi suddenly dispersed, a figure descending from the air, resembling a descended divinity as light illuminated the great earth. It was precisely the ‘Iron Lion King’ Shi Tie.

Having originally already been holding the absolute advantage, almost able to slay Sima Chui, after hearing the news, he had no choice but to let off his opponent this time, first hurrying over to the scene.

“We’re already informing the clan and the South Heaven Region at the greatest possible speed,” Shi Tie said, before asking, “How much time do we have?”

Yan Zhaoge answered, “About the time it takes for an incense stick to burn.”

Shi Tie silently calculated, “Even if Master rushes over with the Clear Qi Robe, he may not be in time.”

The others all closed their eyes painfully. If even the combination of Broad Creed Mountain’s number one expert and their Sacred

Artifact, the Clear Qi Robe, wouldn't be able to make it in time, Broad Creed Mountain had no solutions left at all.

What they could do now was only wait impatiently, whilst unable to do anything at all.

This feeling was virtually as unbearable as closing their eyes and waiting to die.

This was true for everyone here other than Yan Zhaoge, staring fixatedly at the wreckage of the golden tower before him, his gaze flickering unceasingly, as though considering something.

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, Shi Tie asked in a deep tone, "You have a plan?"

After pondering for a moment, Yan Zhaoge met Shi Tie's gaze, "There's some risk, and it would require your, eldest apprentice-uncle's, assistance."

Everyone's spirits were greatly roused, while Shi Tie's expression remained unchanged, "No need to worry-just tell me your plan."

HSSB 255: Fighting Out A Future

Everyone's gazes landed on Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge's expression was calm as he said earnestly, "I want to re-establish the Devilish Domain Grand Formation here."

As the words left his mouth, everyone began exchanging glances.

Shi Tie's gaze also revealed a bit of surprise, but he quickly calmed down, asking, "The risks that you spoke of earlier-what do they entail? In what way do you need me to assist?"

Yan Zhaoge answered speedily, "By re-establishing the Devilish Domain Grand Formation, I can use the formation as a guide to draw the devilish qi that was sent to the South Heaven Region back here."

Hearing Yan Zhaoge's words, Shi Tie did not interrupt, looking at him silently, waiting for him to continue.

"This way, we would first take care of the crisis over at the South Heaven Region before dealing with the one before our eyes," Yan Zhaoge continued, "Though I would act as the controller of the formation, I need an expert on the level of eldest apprentice-uncle to reseal the opened Great Nine Underworlds Door here; your fist-intent will work well for this."

"The risk lies in the fact that we cannot destroy the core of the

Devilish Domain Grand Formation before it gets completed. The Great Nine Underworlds Door will truly open for a moment, and if it is not sealed in time, there would be the possibility of the Nine Underworlds truly descending.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “If that happened, we would be choosing the lesser of two evils anyway. We would have to fight a bloody battle here, withstanding the invading Nine Underworlds Evil Devils, buying time for the other experts over at our clan to come to reinforce.”

Shi Tie directed a deep glance at Yan Zhaoge, “The crux does not lie with me. Any late Essence Talisman Martial Grandmaster would be able to do it. The crux lies with you.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, saying quietly, “I’m seventy percent confident I can succeed.”

“Seventy percent?” Shi Tie repeated, before saying, “If it really is seventy percent, it is already sufficient. We’ll do it!”

Yan Zhaoge looked at those by the side, “Elders, please set the place up as per my instructions. We must re-establish the formation as soon as possible; time is of the essence.”

The Martial Grandmasters of Broad Creed Mountain exchanged glances, looking first at Yan Zhaoge, then at Shi Tie, before acknowledging his words emotionally.

While they all had worries within their hearts, with little time being afforded to them, they could not afford to hesitate.

If there was even the slightest delay, the Nine Underworlds would descend in the defenceless lands of the South Heaven Region.

Very quickly, in response to Yan Zhaoge's low cry of 'Rise!', countless black spirit patterns instantly surfaced on the ground.

Innumerable sigils circulated, black light surging up into the heavens, transforming into countless black clouds that obscured the heavens and concealed the sun.

Bloodred lightning descended unceasingly from the black fog, mournful and shocking, the gloomy flickering light of the black spirit patterns emanating a feeling that was filthy to the extreme.

The terrifying air resurfaced, not emanating a feeling of evil, but causing minds to drift, unable to stabilise.

A strange power seemed to attract the deepest, darkest desires, evil thoughts and stubbornness at the depths of everyone's hearts, magnifying them unceasingly.

At the centre of the formation of black light, a golden tower rose from the ground along with the surging of golden light, growing unceasingly as though it had a life of its own.

Led by the radiance, countless black spirit patterns moved in mid-air, resembling numerous black chains as they entangled the tall golden tower, before all growing taut as though bearing a tremendous force.

A bloodred glow was emanated from the peak of the tall golden tower, gradually condensing into the form of a door.

This red door of light rippled like water, its silhouette gradually projected onto the ground before the golden tower, another great door surfacing on the ground.

Within the area enveloped by the Devilish Domain Grand Formation, the black fog instantly grew denser and denser, till later, it became stickier and stickier, resembling mud.

The devilish qi began forming a terrifying devilish domain as it enveloped the surrounding area.

Outside of the domain of devilish qi, the First Seat Elder of Broad Creed Mountain and some of its other experts worriedly watched that terrifying devilish domain which enveloped a vast amount of territory.

Having already received Shi Tie's notification, they knew that the current Devilish Domain Grand Formation was being re-established by their own side.

However, such an action that was like playing with fire still left

them all feeling uneasy.

However, in comparison, this was already a slightly better result. At the very least, it was much better than the Nine Underworlds descending in the totally defenceless South Heaven Region.

It was only that if Yan Zhaoge and Shi Tie failed, the Nine Underworlds would descend here in Yunwu County, and everyone would have to stand on the frontlines, withstanding the initial invasion.

Earlier, not yet having penetrated and entered the Devilish Domain Grand Formation, having known that Yunwu's Wang Family was going to cause trouble, when Broad Creed Mountain's martial practitioners had rushed onto the scene, in case of the worst, they had arranged for the ordinary citizens of Yunwu County as well as those others living nearby, along with weaker martial practitioners, to evacuate.

Currently, they were not to the extent of being all panicked and flustered, allowing those of Broad Creed Mountain to properly engage in a great battle in Yunwu County.

This was an important reason for the Sand Region taking on this risk rather than the South Heaven Region.

The Sand Region urgently moved, while the news was also relayed at the greatest possible speed back to Broad Creed Mountain in the Central Heaven Region as well as the Southern Heaven Region.

That the position of the Great Nine Underworlds Door could change also had to be told to the other regions, in preparation for the unlikeliest of possibilities.

Gazing into the distance at the Devilish Domain Grand Formation which had already completely swallowed up the Wang Family ancestral ground, the First Seat Elder of the Sand Region muttered to himself, “Yan Zhaoge, you definitely have to succeed ah...”

Within the Devilish Domain Grand Formation, at the core region, the black fog had vanished, to be replaced by a strange space filled with red light.

Within this space, the golden tower stood tall, the projected silhouette of the red door of light growing clearer and clearer on the ground.

On the ground, the space between the two doors distorted and shook unceasingly, causing the ground to also distort intensely.

There seemed to be something that wanted to tunnel up from beneath the ground, ripping out a deep abyssal rift within.

As this rift opened, it would be the rumoured path to the Nine Underworlds.

The terrifying air that bewitched people’s hearts was currently at an all-time high, shaking people’s hearts.

Yan Zhaoge's expression was heavy as he stood beneath the golden tower, both palms pressing on its surface, at the same time also swivelling his head as he looked calmly at the Great Nine Underworlds Door on the ground that was gradually, truly opening.

"We're halfway there," Yan Zhaoge said, "The devilish qi that was sent to the South Heaven Region is being pulled back once more."

Hearing Yan Zhaoge's words, everyone slightly breathed sighs of relief.

If this Great Nine Underworlds Door opened without preventing the formation in the South Heaven Region from doing the same, there would be two paths opened to the Nine Underworlds. At that point, everyone's feelings would not be something that despondent and furious could describe.

Everyone's attention was currently fixed on the tall golden tower.

The golden tower suddenly shook slightly.

"Eh?" Yan Zhaoge's expression changed slightly, "Someone wants to forcibly end my movements and drag the devilish qi back?"

Above the red door of light at the peak of the tall golden tower, a strange scene suddenly surfaced.

Raising their heads, they all let out startled, shocked cries, “Elder Liu?!”

Yan Zhaoge raised his head as he was able to, seeing that a figure was reflected above that red door of light. It was a white-haired old man.

He also recognised the other party, who was, shockingly, a longtime Elder of Broad Creed Mountain.

That Elder Liu, his expression gloomy and slightly crazed, was currently clutching a black jade talisman, into which he was madly pouring in his true essence and fist-intent!

Shi Tie’s expression was sunken as water while Yan Zhaoge’s gaze was cold.

An illusory scene of red light also appeared before Elder Liu, from which he could clearly see Yan Zhaoge and the others.

He was slightly stunned for a moment, then involuntarily let out a strange laugh as he knew that his identity had already been exposed, “Good son born of Yan Di, it’s you again?!”

HSSB 256: Suppressing The Nine Underworlds

Looking at Elder Liu, Yan Zhaoge smiled but did not speak, focused on controlling the Devilish Domain Grand Formation.

Shi Tie glanced at Elder Liu from the side, saying slowly, “After senior apprentice-uncle Wang , is it the same for senior apprentice-uncle Liu as well?”

Elder Liu snorted, “People like you who have already stepped into the late Essence Talisman stage before having turned middle-aged-how can you possibly understand us?”

He said coldly, “Words are useless-let’s see your true abilities!”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, “I completely agree.”

As he said this, maintaining his left hand’s position on the surface of the golden tower, he wrote some spirit patterns with his right hand in mid-air.

As the spirit patterns landed on the golden tower, it instantly stabilised once more, the red light at the top of the tower growing stronger.

The door projected on the ground grew clearer and more real, gradually beginning to completely take form, as the great earth

began to split apart!

What lay beneath the fissured earth was not mud and rocks, but glowing red light!

The distorted space led not to the underground of the Eight Extremities World, but the Nine Underworlds of legend!

The abnormal, terrifying aura which bewildered people's hearts reached an unprecedented peak at this moment, almost turning people insane!

Within the red light, Elder Liu seemed to suffer the backlash of the formation as his face first turned an unhealthy bloodred, then became pale.

The black jade talisman within his hands shattered, its fragments flying in all directions, shooting onto his body and face, actually piercing deeply into his flesh.

“Yan Zhaoge!” Elder Liu howled like a wounded beast.

As the silhouetted red door of light shook, Elder Liu's form gradually disappeared.

“Quickly notify the clan of this matter,” Shi Tie said without looking back, Elder Cong acknowledging his words.

Yan Zhaoge said, “Eldest apprentice-uncle, it is still a false door now; this is the final moment before false turns into real!”

Looking at the terrifying rift on the ground, the aura of the Nine Underworlds emanating from it that surged to the heavens, Shi Tie advanced as innumerable spirit talismans appeared around his body.

The spirit talismans transformed into numerous spirit arrays, the many spirit arrays congregating, forming a silhouette that resembled an altar whilst also a pagoda, enveloping Shi Tie’s body within.

The altar shrunk, becoming more and more condensed, merging within Shi Tie’s body, clear and bright, emanating infinite radiance from within.

At this moment, Shi Tie resembled an indestructible Heaven Stabilising Needle, an unmoving pillar in the middle of the sea.

He strode forward, coming above the crimson red deep abyss, his entire person treading on the rift.

The deep abyss clearly shuddered, as Shi Tie followed up with a punch. The punch was slow, but was heavy and condensed till any more seemed impossible. While it was slow to the point of not entering the eye, it was filled with a feeling of eternity, never being moved, never being damaged.

It was as though this punch could halt the changing of the vast oceans and the boundless fields, stopping day from turning to night and night from turning to day.

That crimson rift seemed to be frozen in place at this moment, time and space all halting together.

However, that ferocious aura of the Nine Underworlds was still skyrocketing unceasingly, seemingly angered by Shi Tie, as incomparably terrifying existences seemed to want to rush out of the rift!

Shi Tie's Profound Light Divine Armour shone with a black light, bolstering his punch that was heavy like a thousand mountains, causing the area around the rift to distort.

A power that seemed able to stabilise the oceans and lift up the heavens forcibly suppressed that crimson rift.

The crimson rift seemed like a wound in the Eight Extremities World as it distorted intensely at this moment, wanting to struggle and expand.

However, frozen by Shi Tie's fist-intent, it was forever unable to expand a single step.

Trapped within the rift lay ferocious beasts who struggled to break free of their cage. Having descended into this world they wanted to escape and rampage as they like.

The Great Nine Underworlds Door had been successfully suppressed by Shi Tie, but Yan Zhaoge and the others still couldn't let down their guard.

Above the tall golden pagoda, that door formed of bloodred light was already beginning to dissipate at this moment.

The radiance of the tower also gradually dimmed, seemingly having turned into an ordinary stone tower.

The countless black spirit patterns enwrapped about the golden tower similarly disintegrated.

The devilish domain that enveloped the Wang Family ancestral ground did not completely dissipate, instead beginning to see some changes.

The black devilish domain was currently turning bloodred.

At this time, the source of the devilish domain's power had already become the terrifying Great Nine Underworlds Door.

The original formation, having run out of strength, with its mission complete, began dissipating for good, but only now could a more terrifying devilish domain descend into this world.

True devilish domain!

Enveloped by the bloodred, majestic devilish qi, Yan Zhaoge and the others all felt various emotions weighing on their hearts, all of them magnified several times over.

As compared to in the black devilish domain of earlier, at this moment, it was even harder to stabilise the mind.

Especially with the immense pressure brought to them with the descent of the Nine Underworlds. At this moment, restlessness and rashness and also negative emotions like fear and horror were all being nourished and growing.

The urge to kill and destroy that accompanied it was also strengthening unceasingly.

Everyone here, Shi Tie included, had to curb the various evil intentions within their own hearts, to ensure that they were not consumed by the Nine Underworlds.

This way, having to divide their attention, everyone's strength was reduced.

As the one suppressing the Nine Underworlds, Shi Tie was bearing the most pressure, the crimson rift beneath his feet distorting even more intensely.

Vaguely, bloodied water began to surge out from within the deep abyss.

Sucking in a deep breath, Yan Zhaoge lifted up the pillar of the divine palace before spreading out the Immortal Crane Wings behind him, shooting towards the crimson rift at a shocking speed.

Having come above the deep abyss, Yan Zhaoge pushed onto the pillar of the Divine Palace with his palm, numerous patterns of light appearing on the surface of the pillar, shining with a dazzling light as it descended mightily towards the deep red abyss below!

Just as Shi Tie was clashing with the power of the deep red abyss, suppressed by the pillar of the Divine Palace, the flames of qi instantly weakened.

Shi Tie exhaled with a loud noise as his wielded his fist-intent at its peak, the bloodied water seeping out from the deep red abyss instantly being suppressed back within once more.

The aura of the Nine Underworlds surged madly, seeming as though its anger could not be contained, unwilling to take a step back in the least.

As the bloodred devilish qi was broken through, a group of people rushed in, consisting of the First Seat Elder of the Sand Region and other experts of Broad Creed Mountain. Seeing the changes in the devilish domain, knowing that Yan Zhaoge's and Shi Tie's plan had most likely succeeded, they hurried here to reinforce.

While the Sand Region's First Seat Elder was far inferior to Shi

Tie, he was still an Essence Talisman Martial Grandmaster expert, who was also fresh and newly arrived to the battle.

With his addition, the Great Nine Underworlds Door completely fell at a disadvantage, beginning to close!

The aura of the Nine Underworlds surged, a last madness emanating from within.

Now, from the red light of the deep abyss, numerous streaks of black light suddenly shot into the air, aimed towards Yan Zhaoge and Shi Tie!

Elder Cong and the other Broad Creed Mountain Martial Grandmasters all came forward, helping Yan Zhaoge and Shi Tie to block it.

However, that black light was incomparably violent and brutal as even Essence Spirit Martial Grandmasters like Elder Cong were pushed into retreat.

The black light exploded, a Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster of Broad Creed Mountain, taken slightly off guard, had his right hand directly blown off!

“Nine Underworlds Yin Thunder!” Yan Zhaoge’s pupils dilated abruptly.

Seeing Shi Tie and the First Seat Elder of the Sand Region already

able to lock down the rift, Yan Zhaoge controlled the pillar of the Divine Palace, suppressing the incoming Nine Underworlds Yin Thunder.

Suppressed by the pillar of the Divine Palace, the remaining Nine Underworlds Yin Thunder transformed into numerous black orbs of thunder.

However, the pillar of the Divine Palace was still rendered unstable by the impact.

As Yan Zhaoge and the stone pillar stumbled backwards, landing on the ground, a black orb of thunder fell over to just right beside him!

At this crucial moment, a massive figure suddenly rushed over from his side, lowering his head and taking that thunder orb within his mouth before speeding off into the distance!

Yan Zhaoge stared.

Pan-Pan!

HSSB 257: All Thanks To You!

Pan-Pan suddenly rushed out, his frame that usually seemed chubby and clumsy quick as flashing lightning at this moment as he lowered his head and took the orb of thunder that laid before Yan Zhaoge in his mouth, before speeding off into the distance.

The next moment, a massive boom resounded as the area exploded with the dark light of thunder, surging into the air.

Yan Zhaoge stared as he saw that massive crater in the ground, filled with dense, roiling smoke.

The Nine Underworlds Yin Thunder exploded, filled with ferociousness and brutality, interfering with Yan Zhaoge's sensory abilities as he could only wait there anxiously.

Having consecutively wielded the Eye of the Thunder Emperor and the pillar of the Divine Palace had taken an extreme toll on Yan Zhaoge, as a feeling of weakness swept down upon him like a tide.

Suddenly, Feng Yunsheng and Ah Hu cried out in delight.

From within the dense smoke, a fat figure that carried the feeling of agility emerged.

Foolish and pure, Pan-Pan returned to Yan Zhaoge's side, extending his tongue and licking him.

From the looks of it, he had thrown away the Yin thunder in time, not having been injured by it, the aftershocks of the explosion having brushed past him.

Yan Zhaoge instantly let out a sigh of relief, fatigue surging even more strongly within him, almost threatening to overwhelm him.

Still, Yan Zhaoge forcibly kept his mind alert as he swivelled his head and looked towards the other side.

There, combining forces, Shi Tie and the First Seat Elder of the Sand Region finally managed to completely suppress the crimson rift.

Yan Zhaoge sucked in a deep breath, forcibly standing, retracting his left hand to his waist as he exhaled, punching out with his right fist.

As his fist-intent surged, the originally dying Devilish Domain Grand Formation suddenly lit up once more, its power at its peak, seemingly having returned to its most flourishing state.

“Eldest apprentice-uncle, prepare yourself,” Yan Zhaoge said in a heavy tone.

Shi Tie nodded, before countless black spirit patterns, resembling chains, came entangling towards his body.

The black spirit patterns converged with Shi Tie at their centre. Yan Zhaoge abruptly knelt down, one knee on the ground, punching down onto the ground with his right fist.

The Devilish Domain Grand Formation flowed strongly in reverse, countless black spirit patterns reversing their flow with Shi Tie at their centre, leading the seemingly infinite, boundless bloodred devilish qi of the surroundings to surge madly towards Shi Tie.

Shi Tie's expression was unyielding and unchanging as his entire body resembled Vajra, eternal and solid, firm and unshakable.

He was like the rocks on a beach, never moving despite the slamming of the waves and the assaults of wild storms.

When the black spirit patterns led the blood-coloured devilish qi to his body, Shi Tie suddenly formed a ring with his hands, slamming down towards the deep red abyss below.

A great amount of blood-coloured devilish qi instantly passed through his body, infused unceasingly within the deep red abyss.

Yan Zhaoge let out a long breath, then breathed in deeply once more, resembling a whale sucking in water.

He stood up once more, striding forward, arriving before Shi Tie with a single leap.

Yan Zhaoge's left fist that was kept at his waist mightily punched out, landing on Shi Tie's back.

Shi Tie took the punch, and accompanied by this punch of Yan Zhaoge's, the Devilish Domain Grand Formation flowed in reverse, all the spirit pattern chains surging towards Shi Tie's back with Yan Zhaoge's left fist at their centre, transforming into a bewitching, complicated rune inscribed within the air.

And below, an unresigned will emanated from the deep red abyss, which still closed with a momentum that could not be stopped.

The fragmented earth healed, the distorted space returning to normal.

The Nine Underworlds that had been about to descend had been forcibly shoved back.

Yan Zhaoge let out a long roar, changes beginning to happen to that strange rune that hovered between his left fist and Shi Tie's back.

The rune transformed into a streak of light, splitting into two as they landed on Yan Zhaoge and Shi Tie.

One of them transformed into a mark like a brand, landing on the back of Yan Zhaoge's left palm.

The other passed through Shi Tie's clothes and vanished without a trace, also having transformed into a similar brand, left on Shi Tie's back.

It was only at this moment that Yan Zhaoge finally relaxed.

Surveying his surroundings, the surrounding devilish domain had already dissipated, gone without a trace.

That terrifying aura which bewitched people's hearts had also vanished.

Above their heads was a clear patch of sky, with the sun visible once again, the original heavens back once more.

The Sand Region's First Seat Elder came forward, asking, "Elder Shi, Zhaoge, how do you feel?"

Shi Tie shook his head, "I'm fine."

"I'm also fine," Yan Zhaoge answered, "However, in the following days, eldest apprentice-uncle and I will have to slowly resolve this devilish mark. Once it completely vanishes, no further trouble will remain."

Now, it was as though Yan Zhaoge and Shi Tie were bearing the pressure of the opening of the Great Nine Underworlds Door between themselves.

Before the devilish mark vanished, if either one of them died, the other would have to bear even more pressure.

If both of them died and the devilish mark had not completely vanished by then, the Great Nine Underworlds Door here at Yunwu County of the Sand Region might open once more.

The First Seat Elder of the Sand Region said, “We will escort you back to the clan as soon as possible. Leave the resolution of this matter to this old man.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “In this battle, I used up quite a bit of strength, and I just have to recuperate properly. After that, carrying the devilish mark, it will not affect me too much in battle with others. As long as I do not die, the devilish mark will not reactivate.”

Able to resolve this great crisis, everyone here was currently smiling from the bottom of their hearts.

Shi Tie turned over, a seldom seen warm smile appearing on his usually cold, stern face as he looked at Yan Zhaoge, “Zhaoge, it’s all thanks to you this time.”

These simple words caused everyone around them to jump in shock.

Shi Tie praising someone was already an extremely rare thing. Him commending someone like this was even rarer.

Especially when the target of his praise was a member of the younger generation, a Martial Scholar.

When the news spread, it would truly be shocking to the ears, to the point of seeming unbelievable.

However, looking again at the Yan Zhaoge before Shi Tie, everyone here had their hearts relax as they instead felt that this was only natural, with it naturally meant to be this way.

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “Eldest apprentice-uncle overstates things. It’s thanks to you, thanks to every disciple of Broad Creed Mountain here, thanks to every single person.”

“This battle was incomparably dangerous-any little mistake and we would have to block off the Great Nine Underworlds Door, fighting to the death with the Nine Underworld Evil Devils, buying time for the reinforcements of the clan to arrive. Forcibly bearing the danger for the South Heaven Region on our own shoulders and taking the initiative to fight is not something anyone could have done.”

Yan Zhaoge cupped his fists in salute towards them all, “It’s all thanks to everyone.”

Elder Cong sighed emotionally, “No, it’s really all thanks to you, Zhaoge. Otherwise, we would not even have the chance to choose; we’d be left watching on helplessly as the worst case scenario played out.”

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, he sighed within his heart.

This youngster had actually borne immense pressure. Whatever the situation in the South Heaven Region, re-establishing the Devilish Domain Grand Formation here, as long as the plan failed, with the Nine Underworlds truly descending in this land, Yan Zhaoge would definitely be rebuked greatly.

Even if he saved the defenceless South Heaven Region, decreasing the overall losses, people generally unconsciously overlooked what had not happened, instead remembering more that Yan Zhaoge had caused the originally already destroyed Devilish Domain Grand Formation to recover, leading to the descent of the Nine Underworlds in the Sand Region.

Doing more, he could do more wrong. Doing less, he could do less wrong. Doing nothing-he would definitely not go wrong.

Standing out at the most critical of times originally required great courage as well as resolution.

The Broad Creed Mountain Martial Grandmasters all solemnly cupped their fists towards Yan Zhaoge, “This time, it was all thanks to Zhaoge, allowing for the reversal of the raging tides.”

HSSB 258: Additional Gains

With the prevention of the descent of the Nine Underworlds, the battle of Yunwu County also reached an end.

In this battle, Broad Creed Mountain also suffered some casualties, but thankfully very few.

Supporting one another, the forces of Broad Creed Mountain took care of their wounds and regrouped. Under the arrangements of the Sand Region's First Seat Elder, they began dealing with the aftermath of the situation, and cleaned up the battlefield.

In this battle, the Wang Family of Yunwu County had been virtually eradicated; the few who remained had been caught to be interrogated later on.

Other than that, there were also some Decimating Abyss martial practitioners, remnants of Black Nightmare Mountain included, who had been captured alive. What awaited them was similarly harsh interrogation and then death.

Following behind Shi Tie, Yan Zhaoge left the Wang Family ancestral ground. Far away was a great amount of desert, but leaving Yunwu County, few people could be seen.

Because of the natural environment here, there were fewer people here than in the Heaven Domain's South Heaven Region.

However, there were still a number of densely populated areas, where many ordinary people lived.

Looking at these people, Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly.

Harbouring some emotions, he swivelled his head, seeing a hint of a smile also surfacing on Shi Tie's usually cold, stern features as he gazed at the distant town.

Yan Zhaoge let out a long breath, raising his left hand. Imprinted on the back of his left hand was a rune reminiscent of a brand.

This mark was red as blood, seemingly not just engraved onto the flesh and blood on Yan Zhaoge's hand, but instead inscribed deep within his very soul.

Looking at it from the side, Ah Hu scratched his head, "Young Master, you have performed a great merit this time, but having this sort of thing imprinted on you is also very troublesome."

"According to what you say, before this devilish mark has been resolved, if something happens to you and Elder Shi, there will be the possibility of the Great Nine Underworlds Door reappearing here in the Sand Region. Will those of the Decimating Abyss come specifically to kill the both of you?"

Yan Zhaoge nodded, "This is a very possible thing. Therefore, we are going to have to be careful of such problems surfacing."

Ah Hu drew back the corners of his mouth, “What a headache.”

Yan Zhaoge looked at the devilish mark on the back of his left hand, “It is not completely a bad thing. There are risks, but other than the rewards from the clan, there have also been some additional gains this time.”

Ah Hu had an uncomprehending look on his face as he also looked towards the back of Yan Zhaoge’s hand, “What other gains ah?”

Yan Zhaoge stroked his lower chin, saying as he looked at his left hand, “Through this time’s incident and this mark left on my hand, my understanding of the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss has increased further.”

“Know thyself and know thy enemy, and thou shalt survive a hundred battles. The reason the incident in Yunwu County was so perilous this time was that we had not thought that the altered grand formation of the Decimating Abyss could actually lead to such an effect. Being caught unawares, we could only react on the spot.”

Yan Zhaoge put down his left hand, “While being able to react on the spot can be considered praiseworthy, how is it not something that reeks of helplessness? If we were able to let everything stably proceed according to plan, the risks would be much lower.”

Feng Yunsheng was also gazing at the devilish mark on Yan Zhaoge’s hand from the side.

Noticing her gaze, Yan Zhaoge raised his brows, “How is it? I said to you that at Clear Concealed Lake previously, I was not familiar with formations. Afterwards, I put great effort in it; only this time counts as a true show of my abilities.”

Seeing his intentionally arrogant look that demanded for praise, Feng Yunsheng could not help but laugh, relaxing greatly as she shot him a thumbs up, “Yes, yes, yes, it was this little maiden who was shallow in my knowledge previously. Please do not take my meagre experience to heart.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded satisfiedly, “Very good, this student has potential.”

Because of the devilish mark, Yan Zhaoge and Shi Tie did not remain in the Sand Region, instead setting off back for Broad Creed Mountain in the Central Heaven Region.

Before they left, they made a trip to Suzhou City together.

Xu Fei had specifically been dispatched to Suzhou as Acting Elder to fill up the gap in position here due to the chaos in the Sand Region this time.

With the matter not having occurred in the Sand Region but in the neighbouring Yunwu County this time, Xu Fei’s talents had been rather wasted.

However, he performed his duties diligently, solidly guarding Suzhou, preventing the enemy from openly attacking somewhere but covertly attacking elsewhere, leaving Suzhou exceptionally stable.

With the incident of Yunwu County having ended, Xu Fei no longer had a need to stay on here as Acting Elder. After all, him being dispatched here had been due to unique circumstances.

It was just that he wasn't able to return to Broad Creed Mountain alongside Yan Zhaoge, Shi Tie and the others, still having to wait for the situation to completely stabilise as well as his handover to the next Acting Elder of Suzhou before he could actually return.

Seeing Yan Zhaoge and Shi Tie, after having greeted Shi Tie properly, Xu Fei lightly punched Yan Zhaoge's shoulder, "I've heard about the situation-nice!"

Not reestablishing the devilish formation, with the position of the Great Nine Underworlds Door changing, the Sand Region would be secured while the South Heaven Region would face disaster.

The losses being greater, Yan Zhaoge and the martial practitioners who had assaulted the Wang Family ancestral ground would definitely be held responsible, but everyone would bear it together. Even Elder Cong who had personally destroyed the golden tower would not be pulled out alone to shoulder all the blame.

With the great game-changing move of the Decimating Abyss this time that surpassed everybody's predictions, if blame really had to be ascribed, it would be that all of Broad Creed Mountain's plans, from top to bottom, had been seen through by the enemy, not being a mistake of the combatants.

While with the reestablishment of the devilish domain, while the South Heaven Region would be secured, if they failed to shove the Nine Underworlds back in and they descended in the Sand Region, as the one who had suggested this method, Yan Zhaoge alone would have to bear at least half of the blame.

Even if all of Broad Creed Mountain's higher echelon experts knew that Yan Zhaoge's plan had actually prevented the worst case scenario, lightening their losses, and he had instead performed well rather than done wrong, those lower-ranked martial practitioners, especially those in the Sand Region, might not be able to understand this point.

At that time, things would be greatly made difficult for Yan Zhaoge, resembling the pressure of a collapsing mountain.

If Yan Zhaoge had instead kept his silence, he would be safe from most reproach. At the same time, it would be hard to blame everyone for the incident, and even if he was punished, he would be punished alongside everyone else, with the punishment not being too great.

But that was not his choice. He stepped forward bravely, bearing the immense risk all on his own. Even if he was not punished, he could face a situation where he was the target of countless ignorant

fingers, the scourge of all.

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, Xu Fei sighed lightly, “Yan Zhaoge, nice one.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly, “If it were you, if it were eldest apprentice-uncle, you would also make the same decision.”

Xu Fei also smiled as he patted Yan Zhaoge’s shoulder.

Yan Zhaoge retracted the smile on his face, hesitating slightly for a moment before he said, “There is something that I think you should know.”

Saying thus, Yan Zhaoge glanced at Shi Tie, standing not far away, “Eldest apprentice-uncle already knows.”

Listening to a few sentences of Yan Zhaoge’s, Xu Fei was stunned on the spot.

Possessing a firm and stable will, he immediately recovered after a moment’s shock, falling into a deep silence.

Looking at the uncontrollable grief that had surfaced within Xu Fei’s eyes, Yan Zhaoge let out a vast sigh, “At present, I still cannot confirm it, with it only being my personal suspicion. However, if it is...I mean in that off chance that it is true, I think you should be prepared for it.”

Within the Devilish Domain Grand Formation at Clear Concealed Lake, Xu Fei had also clashed with that masked Martial Grandmaster. His brows were tightly knit as he thought back to the scenes of that time.

Xu Fei shook his head, removing the wineskin from his waist and gulping down a fierce mouthful of it before he wiped his mouth, saying emotionally, “Don’t worry, I’m fine.”

Parting ways with Xu Fei, Yan Zhaoge, Shi Tie and the others rushed back without rest to Broad Creed Mountain.

While the journey was a long one, led by Shi Tie, they still arrived back at the clan very quickly. Someone was already waiting there for them, along with some good news.

“The escaped Elder Liu, has already been caught by Elder Yan.”

HSSB 259: You Lack The Qualifications

Elder Liu was the one who had directed the devilish qi from the Sand Region to the South Heaven Region from behind the scenes.

After Elder Wang, yet another Essence Talisman Martial Grandmaster higher echelon expert of Broad Creed Mountain had been corrupted by the Decimating Abyss and the Nine Underworlds.

After his identity had been exposed, he had immediately attempted to flee, but had still been unable to flee from the hands of Yan Zhaoge's father, Yan Di, eventually being captured.

When Yan Zhaoge saw this old man once more, despite his dispirited appearance, his gaze was intractable, holding no fear as he just smiled coldly, looking at Yan Zhaoge and Yan Di.

The old Chief Yuan Zhengfeng, Fang Zhun and Shi Tie included, they all frowned as they looked at Elder Liu.

“For senior apprentice-brother Wang, it was a problem of longevity,” Yuan Zhengfeng said slowly, “What about you, junior apprentice-brother Liu? Why have you come to this stage today?”

Swivelling his head to look at Yuan Zhengfeng, Elder Liu appraised him with a rather strange gaze.

After a time, Elder Liu spoke, “Senior apprentice-brother Yuan...

I haven't addressed you this way for a long time, always calling you Chief ever since you succeeded the position."

Yuan Zhengfeng's expression didn't change, but his gaze was also a little emotional.

Placed in the outside world, every descendant of Broad Creed Mountain was a Heaven's favoured child. Likewise, for Elder Liu of Broad Creed Mountain, even if he wasn't one of the strongest experts of Broad Creed Mountain, placed in the outside world, he would immediately be a behemoth-like figure.

Outside of the six great Sacred Grounds, Essence Talisman Martial Grandmasters were extremely few.

Able to cultivate to become an Essence Talisman Martial Grandmaster, Elder Liu's accomplishments already presided over that of countless people.

It was only that there was always a higher mountain. Even while they were all geniuses, there were also divisions of power amongst them, like how Yuan Zhengfeng and Xin Dongping had been the strongest elites of their generation.

And while compared to others, Elder Wang and Elder Liu could already be considered geniuses amongst geniuses, they dimmed greatly when placed alongside Yuan Zhengfeng.

Elder Wang had entered the clan earlier than Yuan Zhengfeng,

while Elder Liu had entered later.

Looking at that white-haired old man before him, that elegant youth who had consulted him on difficult problems on the martial dao in the past seemed to appear before Yuan Zhengfeng's eyes once more.

However, he heard Elder Liu continue speaking in a strange tone, "...senior apprentice-brother Yuan, I have always felt it to be strange. Don't you feel in a hurry at all?"

Yuan Zhengfeng's gaze hardened as he looked at Elder Liu, who looked back at him, "Not speaking of the power and position that becoming a Martial Saint would bring, and also the pressure that it would give to the Sacred Sun Clan's Huang Guanglie, the main thing is-with your old injuries, senior apprentice-brother Yuan, your longevity should already be nearly up?"

Elder Liu laughed, "While you are a Transcending Mortality Martial Grandmaster, your longevity is shorter than other Transcending Mortality Martial Grandmasters. How many years do you have left? Ten? If more than ten, what about twenty?"

Yuan Zhengfeng's gaze did not sway whatsoever as he looked calmly at Elder Liu, saying candidly, "By my calculations, if I do not step into the Martial Saint realm, it should be about ten to fifteen years."

Elder Liu had a slightly sorrowful look on his face, "Right, I only have around ten more years at most."

“Bringing it up with senior apprentice-brother Wang a few years ago, he mentioned that he didn’t even have ten years left.”

“It is true that his cultivation base is higher than mine, but he is also much older than me, not having much time left now.”

Elder Liu looked at Yuan Zhengfeng, “Senior apprentice-brother Yuan, looking at yourself slowly walk to the end of your life like this-how do you feel?”

Yuan Zhengfeng asked mildly, “That’s your reason?”

Elder Liu said, “Asking me to face sabres and swords directly, engaging with other martial practitioners in battle, I wouldn’t shrink back in the least. Even if the enemy is stronger than me, however small the chance, I also have a chance against them. While defeating the strong as the weak is tough and rare, it is still something that does happen.”

“Before the final second, who the victory goes to is still an unknown!”

Elder Liu’s expression turned severe, “But now, my opponent is the heavens!”

“Having cultivated painstakingly for so long, I can clearly see that under normal circumstances, there is already no longer any hope of making any further breakthroughs in my cultivation

base.”

“This battle of longevity against the heavens, I cannot win it. I have already lost, having no chances of victory whatsoever!”

Looking at Yuan Zhengfeng, Elder Liu laughed tragically, “Senior apprentice-brother Yuan, your old injuries make it such that you are not sufficiently confident in breaking through to the Martial Saint realm. Yet, it is because you are the current Chief as well as strongest expert of Broad Creed Mountain, with strong enemies abound in the outside world, that you do not dare to lightly take the risk. Because so long as you fail, the heavens of Broad Creed Mountain may collapse.”

“But at least you still have hope. You still can give it your all, having a chance of victory. Just like in a battle against powerful enemies, you could be killed, but you could also obtain victory.”

“What about me and senior apprentice-brother Wang? We can only silently wait to die!”

Elder Liu hissed, “Dying was originally not scary, but with no single bit of hope at all, seeing it drawing near bit by bit, yet whatever I do being helpless, what was originally not scary gradually turned into boundless fear, enveloping the heart.”

Yuan Zhengfeng looked straight at him, “Therefore, joining the Nine Underworlds solves your difficult problem?”

Elder Liu chuckled strangely, “Even Martial Saints have limited longevities, while the true Nine Underworld Evil Devils are existences that forever cannot be extinguished!”

Yan Di said mildly, “In the Earth Domain, I occasionally slew Nine Underworld Evil Devils that emerged.”

Elder Liu’s smile turned very mocking, “I do not know if what you killed were truly pure Nine Underworld Evil Devils, but if they really were those, do you think you truly killed them?”

“Even if they are killed, true Nine Underworld Evil Devils will also be reborn in the deepest depths of the Nine Underworlds, being inextinguishable existences.”

Pointing at his heart, Elder Liu smiled strangely, “As long as the stubbornness, evilness and desires of the human heart are not extinguished, devils will never die out. Not only humans, as long as there are lifeforms in this world who hold desires and stubbornness within their hearts, even if they are temporarily killed, devils will also be reborn.”

Having been listening silently by the side, not interrupting, Yan Zhaoge now suddenly laughed, “Then do you know that having been reborn, devils are actually equivalent to whole new existences? If you place your hopes in this, having gained eternity, do you think you would still be you?”

Glancing at Yan Zhaoge somewhat venomously, Elder Liu let out a cold snort, “You are not an Evil Devil, also never having been to

the Nine Underworlds. What position are you in to speak of them?”

Yan Zhaoge spread out his hands, “Right, let’s first not speak of something so complicated. Let’s first talk about something simple and crude.”

“Elder Liu, since you know that devils are reborn upon death, you should also know that this does not apply for all devils. So-called true Nine Underworlds Evil Devils are related to their levels of strength.”

Looking at Elder Liu, Yan Zhaoge said neither hurriedly nor slowly, “With your current cultivation base, having fallen to the dark side, you would not reach the benchmark for being reborn.”

Flames of fury arose in Elder Liu’s eyes as he glared hatefully at Yan Zhaoge, his breathing rough, “Falling will give me a boost in strength, allowing me to break through that bottleneck that has long hindered me, my strength successfully increasing by another level, obtaining greater longevity, rising towards even higher levels!”

“Very quickly, I will gain the chance to attain eternal life, while all of you-even if you become Martial Saints, so what?”

Yan Zhaoge said mildly, “Oh, too bad then. Now, you no longer have a chance.”

HSSB 260: The Old Chief Entering Seclusion

Seeing Yan Zhaoge's casual look, Elder Liu felt angered.

It was precisely this youth before him who had wrecked the plans of him and the Decimating Abyss, also extinguishing his final hope.

Once, this youth had made him compliment a tiger father not begetting a dog of a son, being a compliment of the highest order for him.

But today, this youth had decided his fate.

Yan Zhaoge said calmly, "You want to use the lives and safety of countless people as the price for your own advancement. I will not evaluate that here. After all, it is your own freedom to feel that tens of thousands of lives do not match up to yours alone."

"However, the other way around, with your plan having failed, you must naturally bear a corresponding price. Elder Liu, you should long have been prepared for this?"

"However much you underline your pain and helplessness as well as unresigned struggles, it does not change this fact."

Yan Zhaoge smiled mildly, "Could it be that you want to tell us that you feel gaining what you want upon your success would only be natural, while there would be no consequences at all if you

failed?”

Breathing roughly, Elder Liu stared straight at Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge met his gaze calmly, his expression unruffled, filled with humour.

Yuan Zhengfeng waved his hands lightly, “Zhaoge.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly, nodding to Yuan Zhengfeng before he retreated, no longer speaking.

Staring at Yan Zhaoge, his vision sweeping past the devilish mark on the back of his left hand, Elder Liu was taken aback for a moment, understanding the gist of the situation following a moment’s consideration.

No longer emotional, his gaze was instead even colder as he looked at Yan Zhaoge, “You, don’t be so pleased too early.”

Yan Zhaoge raised his brows lightly, an expression that seemed as though he was smiling whilst also not revealed at the corners of his mouth as he looked at Elder Liu, not speaking.

Yuan Zhengfeng sighed, saying to Elder Liu, “Junior apprentice-brother Liu, things having come to this stage, words are already useless. Like senior apprentice-brother Wang, do tell whatever you know about the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss. If Shi Tie has to move, it would not be nice for everyone.”

Elder Liu snorted.

Some gains were obtained from the questioning of Elder Liu, with Broad Creed Mountain gaining a deeper understanding of the Decimating Abyss.

However, what the entire Broad Creed Mountain was concerned about now was whether there were still others who had been corrupted by the Decimating Abyss and the Nine Underworlds amongst Broad Creed Mountain's higher echelon experts.

Sadly, they weren't able to obtain an answer for this from Elder Liu.

Like Elder Wang, at their level, their recruitments into the Decimating Abyss were all carried out individually.

Unless there were major incidents like that at Clear Concealed Lake before, requiring many experts to work together in concert, they were also unable to identify one another as Decimating Abyss operatives.

However, because Elder Liu was exposed, the carrot was pulled out of the ground, with the lower and middle-tier experts below him whom he had corrupted all exposed alongside him.

Leaving the Disciplinary Hall, Yan Zhaoge followed behind Yuan Zhengfeng and the others, the atmosphere amongst the group

slightly heavy.

Fang Zhun said softly, “It’s my fault. Elder Liu has recently left the mountain a few times, also moving some resources of the clan, and those were all approved by me. After the incident of Clear Concealed Lake, I am still not vigilant enough.”

Yuan Zhengfeng waved his hands, “None of us know what is required for the setting up of Devilish Domain Grand Formations; you cannot be blamed for this. In approving the use of those resources, they were all what junior apprentice-brother Liu could normally move within his own authority.”

Walking forward, he swivelled his head to look back at Yan Zhaoge and Shi Tie, smiling, “You have done very well this time; it was all thanks to you. Otherwise, the Nine Underworlds would have descended in the defenceless core lands of the South Heaven Region, and the consequences of that would have been unimaginably disastrous.”

Shi Tie said, “It was Zhaoge’s plan.”

Yuan Zhengfeng nodded, smiling, “Right, Zhaoge has performed a huge merit once again. But my Broad Creed Mountain’s foundations have all long since run dry in rewarding you-what should I reward you with now?”

Yan Zhaoge chortled, “Grand Master, it’s fine as long as your intentions are there.”

They were not offended by that, instead all smiling at his words.

Entering the main hall of the clan, after taking his place at the main position, Yuan Zhengfeng spoke, “Other than the problem of the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss, something else has also happened recently.”

The old man’s expression turned slightly solemn, “There have been definite news that during this period of time, while our clan was dealing with those of the Decimating Abyss, the Sacred Sun Clan obtained a Purple Essence Containing Jade in the southern wilderness.”

Yan Di and Fang Zhun had already known of this, but it was the first time Yan Zhaoge and Shi Tie had heard the news.

Yan Zhaoge knit his brows. The Purple Essence Containing Jade was an extremely rare treasure, being even rarer than the Imitation Killing Jade. At the same time, it was already an object of legend, not having surfaced in this world for many years, usually thought of by all as completely extinct.

In terms of preciousness, it was much more precious than the Imitation Killing Jade, because it was extremely beneficial towards the cultivation of Martial Saints.

Having obtained the Purple Essence Containing Jade held great significance for the Sacred Sun Clan, because it signified that the possibility of the East Coming Martial Saint Huang Guanglie improving would be greater.

“A pity that the Extreme Yin Crown is currently not ours, and our attention is also continually being drawn by the Decimating Abyss,” Yan Zhaoge shook his head rather regretfully.

After Infinite Boundless Mountain, Broad Creed Mountain and Jade Sea City had formed an alliance, if any one of the three possessed the Extreme Yin Crown, as they kept the Heavenly Thunder Hall busy, they could send their troops to bear down on the Sacred Sun Clan’s World Illuminating Peak, at the very least also prematurely forcing Huang Guanglie out of seclusion.

However, with the Extreme Yin Crown now in the hands of Turbid Wave Pavilion and the Sacred Sun Clan having shrunk their defence perimeter around the World Illuminating Peak, their hopes of achieving this were very low.

Yuan Zhengfeng said, “Amidst our diligence, our opponents have also not been sitting around doing nothing.”

They all nodded.

Now, Yuan Zhengfeng’s sound transmission suddenly resounded by Yan Zhaoge’s ears, “Speaking of which, you still have another great merit. Yan Di mentioned to this old man that you also contributed to that Heaven Returning Divine Pill.”

Yan Zhaoge controlled himself not to look at Yuan Zhengfeng, retaining a look like everything was perfectly normal.

Of the entire Broad Creed Mountain, those who clearly knew of this secret were a mere few. Even by Yan Zhaoge, only Ah Hu knew of it.

Of those in the great hall now, Shi Tie and Fang Zhun didn't know about it as well.

This could be said as the current greatest secret of Broad Creed Mountain. Other than those who were personally involved, only the old Chief Yuan Zhengfeng knew about it.

Yan Zhaoge glanced at Yan Di, warmth welling up within his heart. According to their prior agreement, the main credit would be given to Yan Di as much as possible.

However, looking at this now, his father still thought very much for him.

Yan Di's expression was as per usual just like Yan Zhaoge, the father and son not revealing any abnormalities whatsoever.

Now, an old man and an old woman entered the great hall, precisely the two Grand Elders of Broad Creed Mountain. Another old man also entered, actually Xin Dongping who usually never ever left the Martial Repository.

At this moment, the highest echelons of Broad Creed Mountain currently situated in the clan, other than the longtime Elder of

theirs sitting over the Heaven Sealing Gorge, were all congregated here.

Looking at them all, Yuan Zhengfeng slowly said, “You all already know of the matter of the Sacred Sun Clan having obtained the Purple Essence Containing Jade. Time is already not on our side at this moment.”

“Therefore, this old man has decided to soon officially enter secluded cultivation, attempting to break through into the Martial Saint realm!”

HSSB 261: The Position Of Chief

Hearing Yuan Zhengfeng's determination to enter seclusion in a bid to achieve his breakthrough into the Martial Saint realm, most here had heavy hearts.

The number one female expert of Broad Creed Mountain, the Grand Elder, Elder He, of the same generation as Yuan Zhengfeng, said in a heavy tone as she looked at him, "Chief, your old injuries..."

Yuan Zhengfeng's expression was tranquil, "It has already dragged on for a long time. If I don't give it my all now, I might not have a chance in the future."

"All along, the outside situation has been too tense. Even if this old man wanted to try, he also didn't have the time to lightly enter seclusion."

"The current global situation is the best we've had these past years. If I still don't dare to move now, there would be no further need to do so."

"Of course, more critical is that if this old man does not succeed and Old Man Huang of the Sacred Sun Clan does, the situation that only took a turn for the better with so much difficulty would immediately rapidly go all the way downhill, leading to an unprecedented winter. We can only hope that Turbid Wave Pavilion stands on our side as well. Otherwise, even whether we can continue standing here and conversing in safety would be an

unknown.”

Yuan Zhengfeng sighed lightly, “Now, Master is no longer around to shelter us from the winds and the rain.”

As the only younger generation disciple here, Yan Zhaoge listened quietly to their conversation.

Yuan Zhengfeng’s Master, Yan Di’s Grand Master, and also Yan Zhaoge’s Great Grand Master, was precisely the Chief of Broad Creed Mountain following the exalted Heaven Shaker Zhan Dongge, the Heaven Diviner Zhan Xilou.

In terms of seniority, Zhan Dongge would be Yan Zhaoge’s Great Grand Uncle Master, and the Grand Uncle Master of Yan Di, Shi Tie and the others.

However, because of the deeds of these two legendary figures, from the generation of Yan Di and Shi Tie, they had become used to calling them Ancestor Heaven Shaker and Ancestor Heaven Diviner.

This form of address had extended to the even younger disciples of Broad Creed Mountain.

The Heaven Diviner Zhan Xilou was the current final Martial Saint that Broad Creed Mountain had produced.

Following his death, Broad Creed Mountain had yet to produce

another Martial Saint. Yuan Zhengfeng and Xin Dongping who had originally been touted to step into the Martial Saint realm were all stuck at the Transcending Mortality Martial Grandmaster bottleneck.

By Elder He's side, Broad Creed Mountain's other Grand Elder, Elder Zhang, looked at Xin Dongping, "What about senior apprentice-brother Xin?"

Sitting quietly there, Xin Dongping simply answered, "The heat's not there yet."

Elders He and Zhang both sighed.

Yuan Zhengfeng said, "This old man is already resolved. In entering seclusion this time, fortune or calamity is unpredictable, and long or short an unknown. Therefore, I need someone to temporarily take the place of this old man before I enter seclusion, allowing this old man to let my hands free and rush towards the Martial Saint realm with all my might."

His gaze swept over Xin Dongping, Elder He and Elder Zhang, "In the time that this old man is in seclusion, I hope that junior apprentice-brothers and sister can assist this person, supporting the clan in moving stably forward."

Xin Dongping nodded quietly, "Okay."

After pondering for a moment, Elders He and Zhang also nodded,

“Since Chief has already resolved himself, we will do as he says.”

Yuan Zhengfeng had long since had the intention of going into seclusion in a bid to achieve his breakthrough into the Martial Saint realm, just that this had been hindered by various reasons. Everyone could also be considered as having had prior warning of this.

With the current global situation comparatively safe, along with the Purple Essence Containing Jade causing the latent threat of the Sacred Sun Clan to grow more pressing, everyone knew that Yuan Zhengfeng entering seclusion this time was already something that had to be done.

While it was said to be temporarily taking his place, this was actually virtually already deciding the identity of Broad Creed Mountain's new Chief.

If Yuan Zhengfeng failed and perished, without anything having to be said, the position of Chief would naturally pass on. Yuan Zhengfeng's current arrangements were virtually passing on his final will.

If Yuan Zhengfeng succeeded, after leaving seclusion, he would most likely also pass down his position like the Sacred Sun Clan's Huang Guanglie, spending his time more on cultivation as he attempted further breakthroughs, rather than continuing to take care of the clan's matters.

What was rather more crucial here was the Sacred Artifact that

sat over Broad Creed Mountain, the Clear Qi Robe.

Most silently agreed that the Clear Qi Robe should be controlled by the clan's number one expert, strongest and strongest combining forces, combatting other peak experts together.

If the number one expert was in seclusion or had journeyed outside, it would normally be controlled by the Chief.

The temporary Clan Chief would therefore also be receiving control of the Clear Qi Robe.

Other than that, the foremost control of Broad Creed Mountain's Grand Formation would also be passed down to this person.

Yuan Zhengfeng's gaze fell on Yan Di, Fang Zhun and Shi Tie.

Shi Tie's gaze was majestic, not rippling in the slightest. He had long said that he would not succeed the position of Chief.

Fang Zhun's gaze was deep as an abyss, resembling the depths of the sea, no fluctuations visible within whatsoever.

Yan Di's gaze was calm, resembling the vast, clear sky, distant and majestic, boundlessly spirited.

Standing by Yan Di's side, Yan Zhaoge's expression was similarly calm as he silently awaited the final result.

His vision just sweeping by the trio, Yuan Zhengfeng did not hesitate, just mildly saying both simply and clearly, “Yan Di, while you are your Master’s youngest, closed door disciple, your Master has decided to place this weight on your shoulders. Are you willing to bear it?”

Yan Di’s expression didn’t change as he rose from his seat and bowed slowly to Yuan Zhengfeng, “This disciple will perform to the best of his abilities, not letting down the entrustment of Master and the clan.”

By the side, Fang Zhun’s expression was as per usual.

Xin Dongping gazed silently at Yan Di, standing before Yuan Zhengfeng.

Looking at Yan Di, Yuan Zhengfeng said, “While you are only temporarily taking on the role of Chief, everyone will know that your Master will be entering secluded cultivation in an attempt to break through into the Martial Saint realm.”

“However the Sacred Sun Clan thinks is not important. Whether it is us or them, we all know full well within our hearts that this is a fight for time.”

“However, as the news spread, it is hard to predict what Infinite Boundless Mountain and Jade Sea City will think.”

Yuan Zhengfeng said, “Within this time, the situation will be very delicate, and dealing with it will have to depend on all of you.”

Yan Di said calmly, “Rest easy, Master. Your disciple and various senior apprentice-uncles as well as various senior apprentice-brothers will all act with prudence.”

Yuan Zhengfeng suddenly smiled as he glanced at Yan Zhaoge, “With Zhaoge having performed yet another great merit, at his current cultivation level, there is already virtually nothing to reward him with.”

“Just let those of the outside world think that this reward was accepted by the father for the son.”

They all smiled. Perhaps some people might indeed believe that this was Yan Zhaoge having won things for Yan Di, but the decision of succession was naturally not something that would stem from just such reasons.

However, carefully considering, everyone could also feel that from a certain perspective, Yan Zhaoge was truly Yan Di’s lucky star.

More importantly, Yan Zhaoge’s current performance was completely unmatched amongst those of Broad Creed Mountain’s younger generation.

Before the incident of Yunwu County, Yan Zhaoge was already being groomed as Broad Creed Mountain's future successor. If no major, unexpected occurrences arose, he would very likely be a future Chief of Broad Creed Mountain.

Yuan Zhengfeng looked at Yan Di, "Follow me."

He got up and walked towards the back of the great hall, Yan Di following behind him.

Yan Zhaoge and the others watched as the two of them left, knowing that they had left for the handover of the Clear Qi Robe and the Broad Creed Grand Formation.

The great hall fell silent, no one speaking.

The gazes of Elders He and Zhang slid past Shi Tie, finally coming to rest on Fang Zhun.

HSSB 262: A Yan Zhaoge As Stable As Mount Tai

Everyone's gazes lingered on Fang Zhun, whose expression was completely tranquil, as though what had just happened had had nothing to do with him at all.

Seeing Fang Zhun this way, the others could not continue staring at him like this as they retracted their gazes.

At this time, whatever they might say all seemed like it would be inappropriate.

Yan Zhaoge looked towards the ground, waiting silently there.

Finally achieving what he had been planning for from the start, Yan Zhaoge also felt rather emotional.

However, the global situation becoming as it was now was indeed something out of his earlier expectations.

“Nine Underworlds...Decimating Abyss...Sacred Sun Clan...” Yan Zhaoge's gaze was a little deep and distant as he remained deep in thought.

That day, Broad Creed Mountain's old Chief Yuan Zhengfeng announced that he was already old and lacking energy, and so was appointing the former First Seat Elder of Broad Creed Mountain's

Martial Inheritance Hall, Yan Di, to assist him in the clan's matters.

Yan Di left the position of the Martial Inheritance Hall's First Seat Elder, with the position being taken up by another.

After hearing this news, all of Broad Creed Mountain had varying thoughts.

The longtime Elders who were comparatively older felt somewhat worried. In recent years, Fang Zhun's style of handling things had become tougher.

However, in comparison, Yan Di's style was even tougher and more aggressive.

While Broad Creed Mountain's senior generation had the exact opposite attitude, feeling galvanised because of this.

Those who had been affiliated to Yan Di's faction rejoiced, only feeling that dark clouds had drifted past to reveal the sun.

While those who were affiliated to Fang Zhun could not be said to be wailing tragically in desolation, their spirits were still low.

Yan Di's style was tough and domineering, but he was still a magnanimous person. With everyone also of Broad Creed Mountain, those of Fang Zhun's faction naturally didn't have to worry about Yan Di collecting past debts from them following his

rise to power.

As long as they had not overstepped their bounds like the previous Principal of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Yan Xu had.

However, getting promoted in the clan would be slightly more difficult for them in the future.

They would require more solid achievements, more outstanding talent.

Yan Di had sufficient magnanimity to let go of the past, and would slowly switch to looking at matters from the perspective of the Chief of Broad Creed Mountain, considering matters from the clan's perspective, for such was the only way to ensure the clan's unity as well as stability.

However, in situations where both sides were evenly matched, whether he would choose the one who had been of his or Fang Zhun's faction was a question that did not have to be asked.

This was only a natural thing. If it were Fang Zhun or anybody else who had succeeded the position, they would also do the same.

As the Chief, while he was the Chief of everyone of Broad Creed Mountain, he would have to have a solid, core group that he would primarily rely on.

Those who had been affiliated to Fang Zhun's faction, wanting to

get promoted, would have to reveal power that was superior to that of their competitors.

As Yan Di's control over the clan grew stronger and stronger, with everyone closely united by his side, all of one mind, this situation would gradually fade away. At that time, there would no longer be those who were closer and those who were comparatively more estranged.

However, this still required a bit of transition time.

From a certain perspective, the length of this transition period would also be a reflection of Yan Di's ability to govern.

However, from an overall outlook, it would have no effect on the general scheme of things. While Yan Di was only temporarily taking over the position of Chief, he could immediately be assured to hold a rather complete grasp over the entire Broad Creed Mountain.

Having stood outstandingly as Chief for many years, Yuan Zhengfeng's prestige and rule in Broad Creed Mountain were indisputable.

Within the clan, the majority of elders were of the neutral faction, supporting whoever Yuan Zhengfeng decided to choose as Chief, the only difference being the level of their support.

And with Yan Di's own strength and prestige, it could ensure that

after he succeeded the position, these neutral higher echelon experts of Broad Creed Mountain would show him strong support.

Therefore, overall, while some people did feel disappointed and worried, the internal selection of Broad Creed Mountain's next Chief did not stir up any rife or dissent.

Returning to his dwellings, Yan Zhaoge encountered some fellow disciples, all of whom were congratulating him.

However, this was not because Yan Zhaoge's position had risen along with Yan Di's succession.

The current Yan Zhaoge had rediscovered the Internal Crystal Furnace, made important contributions in the war of the Eastern Tang, helped the clan to obtain a Maiden of Extreme Yin, ingeniously and subtly drew Infinite Boundless Mountain over to their allied camp at Cloud Portent Mountain, outshone all others at the Heavenly Connection Meet, mightily broke the Devilish Domain Grand Formation at Cloud Concealed Lake...

Not long ago, in the incident of Yunwu County in the Wind Domain's Sand Region, he had forcibly reversed the tides of fate once more.

All of these had long since established Yan Zhaoge's current position.

It was not an exaggeration at all to say that whatever happened to

his father Yan Di now, it would also completely not affect Yan Zhaoge himself.

Whoever succeeded the position of Broad Creed Mountain's Chief, Yan Zhaoge's position as well as status here were already as stable as Mount Tai.

His current fame and position stemmed from himself, and not from others. In the hearts of everyone, it was deeply ingrained that this was the Broad Creed Young Master Yan Zhaoge, and not the son of Broad Creed Mountain's new temporary Chief, Yan Di.

It was even to the extent that in many people's hearts, the title of Broad Creed Young Master was already gradually becoming inappropriate for Yan Zhaoge.

Under these heavens, few still thought of him as a member of the younger generation, with his numerous achievements already having caused people to begin to overlook his age.

At this moment, the reason everyone was congratulating Yan Zhaoge was purely for his father having risen in status, as a normal form of human relations.

Yan Zhaoge could basically also feel this. He smiled as he accepted their congratulations, seemingly not affected by the honour and glory, with everything being as it usually was.

As he walked on a road between mountains, Yan Zhaoge

suddenly halted, his gaze seemingly penetrating through the forests and far into the distance.

“With the news of father temporarily taking up the role of Chief spreading, others should be able to guess of Grand Master entering secluded cultivation in a bid to achieve his breakthrough into the Martial Saint realm...” Yan Zhaoge stroked his lower chin as he pondered.

When the news spread beyond Broad Creed Mountain, the entire Eight Extremities World was indeed shaken by it.

The competition between Yan Di and Fang Zhun in Broad Creed Mountain had not been a secret, and the other five Sacred Grounds as well as those first and second-rate powers had paid close attention to it.

With the decision basically confirmed, everyone thought on it before adjusting their own plans based on the result.

At the same time, those of the other Sacred Grounds also determined that this meant that Broad Creed Mountain's old Chief, Yuan Zhengfeng, was finally going to attempt to take that last step, attempting a breakthrough into the Martial Saint realm.

The news of the Sacred Sun Clan having obtained Purple Essence Containing Jade and the ‘East Rising Martial Saint’ Huang Guanglie very possibly going to increase further in strength also resounded under the heavens.

Hearing the news, Jade Sea City and Infinite Boundless Mountain retained their silence.

If Yuan Zhengfeng broke through successfully, Broad Creed Mountain's leading role amongst their tripartite alliance would be completely set, and Broad Creed Mountain would also become a massive entity not inferior to the current Sacred Sun Clan in the least.

The two Sacred Grounds had much to think on their future positions.

However, the pressure of Huang Guanglie possibly improving a step further was also truly there.

While Turbid Wave Pavilion did not express any stance, and the Sacred Sun Clan and the Heavenly Thunder Hall were unchanged on the surface, hidden undercurrents were surging beneath.

On the peak of the Sacred Sun Clan's World Illuminating Peak, gazing towards the north where the Heaven Domain lay, their current Chief Huang Xu asked quietly, "How go the preparations?"

HSSB 263: Major Movements

Behind Huang Xu stood a middle-aged man, precisely the current Twilight Lord of the Seven Reigning Suns.

The Twilight Lord replied, “Everything is ready, only awaiting the old Chief leaving seclusion.”

His paused slightly for a moment before continuing, “If the situation allows for it, not even having to wait for the old Chief to emerge from seclusion, we can also move.”

Huang Xu nodded before turning, looking to the other side.

There stood a quiet youth, his face shaded under the sunlight. It was precisely his son, the World Illuminating Young Master Huang Jie.

As the two exchanged glances, Huang Jie said softly, “Best wait for Grand Master to emerge from seclusion first.”

After finishing his words, he spoke no longer. Huang Xu and the Twilight Lord did not show intentions of asking further as they nodded, retracting their gazes that were on him.

Huang Xu gazed to the north in the direction of the Heaven Domain, muttering to himself, “Broad Creed Mountain, it’s been so many years. You have been an eyesore for long enough.”

It was not just in the Sacred Sun Clan. In the northeastern part of the Eight Extremities World, in the You Region of the Thunder Domain's six Regions, lay the Heavenly Thunder Hall of the current era's six great Sacred Grounds.

The headquarters of the Heavenly Thunder Hall had dense thunderclouds overhead all year round, instilling fear in the hearts of others.

The massive palace that was completely built of purplish-green metal resembled the royal palaces of kings and emperors of thunder.

In the core, innermost hall of the palace, a bald old man sat on the main seat, looking at those before him.

As this bald old man, with a purplish-green goatee, sat there, a fearsome aura did not emanate from him as he instead seemed very calm.

However, those across from him would involuntarily feel apprehension within their hearts, as though facing the most violent thunderbolts.

The bald old man was precisely the current Lord of the Heavenly Thunder Hall, the Green Thunder Martial Saint, 'Shocking Thunder All Round' Shen Li.

The gaze of this Lord of the Heavenly Thunder Hall swept across

his higher echelon experts gathered here as he said slowly, “The Sacred Sun Clan’s Huang Guanglie and Broad Creed Mountain’s Yuan Zhengfeng are both pursuing breakthroughs, with the situation being very delicate.”

“Despite having just been defeated in the Sand Region, the Decimating Abyss’s losses were not as great as that time at Clear Concealed Lake. If this old man were the leader of the Decimating Abyss, he would stir things up on the lands of Broad Creed Mountain once more.”

While his words were slow, his voice was deep and vigorous, resembling the roiling of thunder as it was filled with pressure.

Beside Shen Li were the bigwigs of the Heavenly Thunder Hall.

Of these, behind an authoritative-looking middle-aged man stood a calm-looking youth with a piercing gaze. It was precisely the Thunder Rumbling Young Master, Lin Zhou.

He was the only Martial Scholar who had been allowed to participate, the only member of the younger generation here.

The middle-aged man before Lin Zhou was naturally his father, the First Seat Elder of the Heavenly Thunder Hall, Lin Tianfeng.

“If the Decimating Abyss has even deeper penetration into the higher echelons of Broad Creed Mountain, this will indeed be a chance for them,” Lin Tianfeng said, “But this will also have to see

how much power they have.”

“Before the Heaven Equalling Yuan Zhengfeng enters seclusion, he will definitely make the appropriate preparations. Giving Yan Di the authority of Chief was one of these.”

“With the presence of the Clear Qi Robe and the Broad Creed Grand Formation, it will not be easy to create trouble there.”

Lin Tianfeng said slowly, “However, speaking of the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss, there is someone of Broad Creed Mountain who is worth paying attention to.”

A Grand Elder of the Heavenly Thunder Hall opposite him nodded, “The loser in the competition for Broad Creed Mountain’s Chief succession this time, the Hidden Dragon Fang Zhun.”

Lian Tianfeng said, “That’s right. Having lost in the competition with Yan Di, his name of hidden dragon has virtually become a joke. In this lifetime, Fang Zhun can only be a hidden dragon, rather than transforming into a true dragon and soaring into the nine heavens. The true dragon is someone else, his most junior apprentice-brother, Yan Di.”

The reason Fang Zhun had been given the name of Hidden Dragon was that in the past, he had been the most outstanding of his generation in Broad Creed Mountain.

Of those of the same generation, there had been no one who

could match him, to the point that whether it was within Broad Creed Mountain or others of the Eight Extremities World, they all believed that he would be Yuan Zhengfeng's successor, as the next Chief of Broad Creed Mountain.

Back then, of that generation of the entire Eight Extremities World, there were only the current Chief of the Sacred Sun Clan Huang Xu and a select few others who were qualified to be mentioned in the same breath as Fang Zhun.

Standing here now, Lin Tianfeng himself had been inferior to Fang Zhun in the past.

When Fang Zhun's fame had resounded the world, Yan Di had not yet even entered Broad Creed Mountain.

However, Yan Di had eventually come up from behind, causing the hidden dragon to eventually die within the deep abyss, unable to continue rising to the heavens.

Under this situation, whether Fang Zhun would lose his mental stability, being bewitched by the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss, was something the entire Eight Extremities World was concerned about.

Hearing Lin Tianfeng mention this matter, those of the Heavenly Thunder Hall all nodded slightly, but their gazes, whether intentionally or not, also swept past the person sitting beside Lin Tianfeng.

That person, who looked similar in appearance to Lin Tianfeng, was currently expressionless. He was another First Seat Elder of the Heavenly Thunder Hall.

He was also Yan Shan's Master, Lin Tianfeng's competitor for the position of the Heavenly Thunder Hall's next Lord following Shen Li.

Once, his advantage had been immense, pressuring Lin Tianfeng till he was virtually unable to parry his blows.

However, over the past one over year, Lin Tianfeng had performed continuous great merits, playing numerous superb hands, not just having fought back from his disadvantageous position but even having reversed the situation, now greatly at the upper hand.

While the competition here at the Heavenly Thunder Hall had not already been decided like over at Broad Creed Mountain, Lin Tianfeng's current advantage was already abnormally immense. As long as he didn't make a fatal error, it would be extremely difficult for his opponent to turn the tables.

Currently expressionless, Yan Shan's Master said, "The Sacred Sun Clan having obtained the Purple Essence Containing Jade, Huang Guanglie advancing a step further is virtually a given, while whether or not Broad Creed Mountain's Yuan Zhengfeng can succeed is still an unknown. How should our Heavenly Thunder Hall conduct ourselves following this?"

Lin Tianfeng mentioned Fang Zhun no longer, instead saying, “Yuan Zhengfeng entering seclusion this time, the situation definitely won’t be a peaceful one. If the Sacred Sun Clan rises in power, our clan should also make more plans for ourselves.”

“Power is the basis for everything, be it resistance or cooperation.”

On the main position, Shen Li now said calmly, “Watch on silently and move according to the situation, then. Broad Creed Mountain’s Clear Qi Robe is a good treasure.”

“If the Decimating Abyss moves this time, it will definitely be a major movement, and they may join hands with the Flame Devils on the East Sea once more. At that time, Jade Sea City will not be able to interfere with us.”

As Shen Li said thus, his gaze swept over all the Heavenly Thunder Hall bigwigs here, “The extermination of spies in our clan also cannot be stopped. If the Decimating Abyss causes chaos amongst us here, we would become a joke.”

Everyone nodded in unison, as a longtime Elder now said, “The Decimating Abyss will not want to create enemies everywhere. If they want to succeed in their movements, they will have to focus their power on a single spot.”

“That way, we will still have to dig out all their people in our clan,” Shen Li said mildly, “How can we allow sand in our eyes?”

Everyone replied in unison, “Yes, Hall Lord.”

Within Broad Creed Mountain, Yan Zhaoge returned to his dwelling, Ah Hu full of joy beside him, being very happy for Yan Di.

“Right, Ah Hu. The thing I asked you to find earlier-how is it?” Yan Zhaoge stroked his lower chin, considering as he asked.

Ah Hu awoke from his reverie, answering, “Young Master, it is already prepared. I will go retrieve it for you now.”

Saying thus, he went to get a few things. Other than a longbow, there were also quite a few materials.

HSSB 264: Devil Shattering Arrows

After returning from the Sand Region, Yan Zhaoge had gotten Ah Hu to find some things for him.

Currently, the manpower and resources Yan Zhaoge was able to command was no longer limited to just the Yan Family. He was now able to move a large amount of Broad Creed Mountain's resources.

As he moved now, Yan Zhaoge could already be considered the target of countless eyes, with the attention of many fixed upon him.

Not mentioning the many great deeds that Yan Zhaoge had accomplished earlier; just from the mere fact that as a Martial Scholar and younger generation disciple, he could already move most of Broad Creed Mountain's resources, he was followed closely by the outside world, who were watching to see what exactly he could do with that.

After all, under the heavens, how many youngsters were there who possessed such authority?

They were overlooking Yan Zhaoge's age and seniority more and more, and for good reason. His numerous great achievements and the authority he possessed had long been something that those of the same age and generation could not compare to.

Yan Zhaoge knew full well that all of his movements were being

analysed. Therefore, the things that he instructed Ah Hu to find had more types than what he truly needed by more than tenfold, serving as concealment as well as to confuse the minds of others.

These few things that Ah Hu passed to him now were those he truly wanted.

The other things might still be of use, but not at the current moment. They could be laid aside for the moment.

Holding that longbow, Yan Zhaoge lightly pulled its bowstring all the way back, feeling its richness in spiritual qi as well as strength.

However, the current Yan Zhaoge still lacked sufficient strength to wield this treasure, leaving him unable to really draw on the power within.

It was because this was a mid-grade spirit artifact.

Only Essence Spirit Martial Grandmasters could fully wield the power of mid-grade spirit artifacts. Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmasters could wield a portion of the power within, but Martial Scholars were unable to do so at all.

Finger on the bowstring, Yan Zhaoge pondered aloud, “You couldn’t find one on the level of a high-grade spirit artifact?”

Ah Hu scratched his head, “Young Master, at present, the only high-grade spirit artifact bows we know of are the Sun Shooter of

the Sacred Sun Clan and the Heaven Shocker of the Heavenly Thunder Hall. If the other three Sacred Grounds had one, we could try to borrow it.”

“However, if it is Sun Shooter and Heaven Shocker, there is truly no way around it. There would only be snatching or stealing, but my current cultivation base is still too low ah.”

Ah Hu looked at the longbow in Yan Zhaoge’s hands, “This Highspeed was the best bow I could find on the lands of the Heaven Domain.”

“I know this too,” Yan Zhaoge nodded, “A mid-grade spirit artifact is actually also sufficient. It is just that the better the bow, the higher the chances of success.”

Although he was currently unable to wield this Highspeed, Yan Zhaoge did not mind this, placing the bow aside as he began inspecting the other things.

After examining all of them, he nodded satisfiedly, “Very good. It is Broad Creed Mountain’s great foundation that allows for everything to be gathered within such a short time. Only relying on the accumulation of the Yan Family, it probably wouldn’t have been managed so quickly.”

Yan Zhaoge took out his Internal Crystal Furnace, low, stable sounds resounding from within as it was evidently still in operation.

Lightly tapping the Internal Crystal Furnace, Yan Zhaoge opened its lid, overflowing bright light instantly gushing out from within.

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly, tapping the body of the furnace. A purple light instantly flew out from within, landing before him. It was a dark green bamboo branch.

The Incinerating Light Sword, Vapour Sealing Sword and Purple Gold Thunder Sword, those three low-grade spirit artifacts that had been placed within alongside it, had long since vanished.

Meanwhile, the bamboo branch seemed to have increased in length by quite a bit, having doubled in size.

Yan Zhaoge reached out and grabbed the bamboo branch, first keeping it. Then, with his aura-qi, the many treasures that he had examined earlier all fell within the Internal Crystal Furnace.

Next, Yan Zhaoge put the furnace lid back on, his hands clapping on the two sides of the Internal Crystal Furnace.

The surface of the Internal Crystal Furnace shone with light, then began circulating mightily once more.

Yan Zhaoge's gaze was calm as he silently focused on the Internal Crystal Furnace, his hands clapping on its sides with a strange rhythm, causing its circulation to always be under his control, moving alongside his thoughts.

Time passed slowly. Letting the outside world be rising with strong winds and high tides or surging with hidden undercurrents as it liked, Yan Zhaoge remained in his own little world, silently controlling the Internal Crystal Furnace to forge what he wanted.

With Yan Di already having been acting as Chief for quite some time, and Broad Creed Mountain's days passing stably in the process, everything moving stably on track, the old Chief Yuan Zhengfeng finally decided to officially enter secluded cultivation.

On the day that Yuan Zhengfeng went into seclusion, Yan Zhaoge also finally reached an end in the matter that he was working on.

The Internal Crystal Furnace temporarily ceasing its circulation, the furnace lid opened. With a wave of Yan Zhaoge's hands, three black shadows flew out from within.

The three black shadows fell in Yan Zhaoge's hands together. They were three jet-black arrows, flickering with a faint golden light, each one around three feet long.

Yan Zhaoge carefully observed the arrowheads up close, seeing that the tips of the arrows were also shining unceasingly. They didn't appear sharp, rather seeming a little illusory as they flickered with light.

The three jet-black arrowheads seemed to be repeatedly switching between true and illusory.

After squinting and appraising for a time, Yan Zhaoge nodded satisfiedly, “The first step is a success, but it still has to be worked on.”

Pushing his head over from the side, Ah Hu asked curiously, “Young Master, what are these?”

“Devil Shattering Arrows,” Yan Zhaoge answered casually.

Ah Hu scratched his big head, “Something specially used to deal with Devilish Domain Grand Formations?”

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly, not answering, closing the Internal Crystal Furnace as he kept it within his Shadow Shrinking Pouch alongside the arrows before he asked, “Grand Master enters seclusion today?”

Ah Hu’s expression grew more solemn, “Yes, Young Master.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, striding out. Ah Hu followed behind him, the two arriving at the back mountains together.

The so-called back mountains of Broad Creed Mountain were Water Ridge Peak, Converting Lake Peak and Setting Wind Peak.

The entire Broad Creed Mountain consisted of eight mountain peaks, all of them smooth as mirrors as well as broad in size. They were not formed naturally, rather having been established by the clan’s experts slicing off the peaks of the original mountains that

year.

Of the eight great mountains, they began with the earth, ending with the heavens. The tallest Heaven Rising Peak was the primary mountain peak of Broad Creed Mountain.

Of the three back mountains, the Setting Wind Peak had freedom of access, with many Broad Creed Mountain disciples active there.

The Water Ridge Peak and the Converting Lake Peak were both restricted grounds. The former was where the number one danger ground of Broad Creed Mountain, the Heaven Sealing Gorge, lay. The latter was where the strongest experts of Broad Creed Mountain underwent secluded cultivation.

Once, the Heaven Establishing Old Man Qiu Yuan had undergone seclusion here. The Exalted Heaven Shaker, Zhan Dongge, invincible in the entire Eight Extremities World, had done so as well, as had the Heaven Diviner Zhan Xilou, who had led Broad Creed Mountain through its darkest ages.

Now, it was Yuan Zhengfeng's turn.

The old man looked at them, smiling, "With this old man entering seclusion, fortune and calamity hard to predict, and the length of time also an unknown, Broad Creed Mountain will depend on all of you."

Yan Di and the others said, "We will definitely perform to our

utmost.”

Standing at the back of the crowd, Yan Zhaoge also bowed towards Yuan Zhengfeng from far away, watching as his Grand Master entered the grounds of seclusion.

Raising his head to look at the sky, the sun did seem bright and beautiful today.

HSSB 265: Coming To The Door For Guidance

After seeing Yuan Zhengfeng enter seclusion, Yan Zhaoge turned to depart from the Converting Lake Peak to return to his residence.

On the road, he saw the silhouette of someone who seemed to be purposefully waiting for him.

Yan Zhaoge greeted him. “Senior apprentice-brother Xu, you’ve finally returned to the Mountain? Have you transferred over your post in Suzhou City?”

That tall and burly figure who looked straightforward and upright was indeed Xu Fei.

“Brother Fei!” Ah Hu enthusiastically greeted him as well.

Xu Fei nodded in response. “Zhaoge, Ah Hu.”

Yan Zhaoge invited Xu Fei into his residence. After both parties had taken a seat, Xu Fei went straight to the point and asked, “Yan Zhaoge, even though you are still a Martial Scholar, you were able to break both Devilish Domain Grand Formations and have come into contact with many fallen practitioners.”

“Out of everyone in our clan, I think that regarding matters of Nine Underworlds Evil Devils, the Decimating Abyss and fallen

practitioners, you must be the foremost expert.”

“This time, I came here to ask for guidance.”

After hearing what Xu Fei said, Yan Zhaoge was silent for a moment before responding, “What senior apprentice-brother Xu wants to ask is whether fallen practitioners have any possibility of regaining their humanity, right?”

Xu Fei nodded. “This may be an extravagant desire, but if there is even a glimmer of hope and that masked Martial Grandmaster is really senior apprentice-brother Shi, then I still want to attempt it.”

Yan Zhaoge did not beat around the brush, and replied, “Senior apprentice-brother Xu, frankly, I also hope that senior apprentice-brother Shi Songtao can revert back to a human, but from what I know at the moment, after someone becomes a fallen practitioner there is no way for them to ever turn back.

“Of course, I do not know everything. I cannot say with certainty that there is no way, but I, at least, do not know of a method.”

The two were very close and Xu Fei was a very straightforward person so Yan Zhaoge did not feel the need to mince words.

Sure enough, after hearing what Yan Zhaoge had said, Xu Fei gently sighed. “I was still holding onto a miniscule hope, but after hearing junior apprentice-brother Yan speak on the matter, I am

afraid that it may be futile.”

Yan Zhaoge lightly responded, “All fallen practitioners, in the end, made their own choice.”

“After falling to the devil, people are no longer human, but rather Nine Underworlds Evil Devils existing in a different place from the Nine Underworlds. They can be said to be an entirely different life form altogether.”

“Although the newly fallen devils retain the memories of the people they once were, they treat killing just as we treat slaughtering cattle and chickens. Their previous memories are more like the remnants of a previous life.”

Yan Zhaoge shook his head. “If it is possible, we all hope that senior apprentice-brother Shi would forsake the darkness. However, would he be willing to do so?”

“Of course, all this speculation is predicated on the assumption that the masked assassin really is senior apprentice-brother Shi.”

Thinking on the problem brought up by Yan Zhaoge, Xu Fei reached for the wine flask hanging at his side. Pulling out the stopper, he did not drink in a grand manner like before, but rather slowly drank a few mouthfuls.

He slowly said, “What you just said, I understand.”

“Even if the people he killed weren’t from our clan, we both know that there is a stark difference between a human killing another human and a Nine Underworlds Evil Devil killing a human.”

Yan Zhaoge looked at Xu Fei. “Exchanging moves these past few times, I’ve managed to gauge a few things about the assassin. Even though he did not display great skill with his martial arts, his murderous aura is extremely cold—he truly wants to send us to our deaths.”

“Although we don’t know of a way to revert a fallen practitioner, it isn’t impossible to first capture him and then try to slowly find a way afterwards.

“However, you and I both know that it is much more difficult to capture an opponent rather than kill them, especially when that opponent may not be any weaker than we are.”

“When two foes are closely matched, the outcome of the match, and life and death, can be decided in a single moment.”

Xu Fei heard this but didn’t respond. After a moment, he nodded.

Yan Zhaoge continued, “I have the pillar from the Great Western Desert which can suppress opponents, so I have confidence if I were to fight him one on one. However, what about you, senior apprentice-brother Xu? Of course, capturing him is best, but are you ready to brave the dangers of being killed by him and still leave him a path to life?”

Xu Fei showed his steely resolve. He quietly said, “Yes. If this person really is senior apprentice-brother Shi, then that is my intention.”

“If he really is irredeemably evil, then I will not let my emotions skew my actions.”

“But before that, I have to at least try.” Xu Fei stood up and said, “I have no parents or blood relations. Instead, I grew up being raised by master, side by side with senior apprentice-brother Shi. Even if I have to take this risk, I will not hesitate.”

Yan Zhaoge sighed, then stood up as well. “We’re still not sure of that masked assassins identity. For now, if you meet him then you shouldn’t treat him as senior apprentice-brother Shi, otherwise it could be very dangerous.”

“If he does not use the techniques which he painstakingly cultivated previously, and only uses the Light Dark Killing Arts, then he isn’t your match. However, if you show mercy while fighting him, then the one who loses may well be you. This martial art has great explosive power, and is specialized for killing people.”

Xu Fei nodded, “Rest easy, I will pay close attention. If someone else is trying to use senior apprentice-brother Shi’s identity to surprise me, I will naturally teach them a lesson.”

Yan Zhaoge spoke again. “If you think this way, then that is for the best.”

After seeing Xu Fei out the door, Yan Zhaoge looked up towards the mountain peak as the sun filtered through the leaves and branches of the foliage. “Now that Grand Master has gone into seclusion, there will be violent tides from the outside world. If our clan can tide through this tribulation, our situation will only get better.”

“But this tribulation is not going to be overcome so easily.”

Xu Fei also stopped, standing side by side with Yan Zhaoge. He squinted as he also looked at the mottled sunlight. “Although the chance of Grand Master succeeding is higher than that of him failing, at the end of the day, neither the Sacred Sun Clan nor the Heavenly Thunder Hall is going to wait for the results.”

“Especially if Huang Guanglie successfully steps into the Martial Saint realm, the Sacred Sun Clan is likely to immediately rush to the Heaven Domain and directly pounce towards our clan.”

“The Decimating Abyss could also take this opportunity to make an appearance. Without speaking about anyone else, just the ‘Scaly Dragon King’ Sima Chui is already an Essence Talisman Martial Grandmaster.”

“And also....” Xu Fei wrinkled his brows. His status was also incomparable to that of his fellow disciples now.

Though his information gathering might not be comparable to Yan Zhaoge’s, he was still able to get access to information that

most ordinary disciples did not know.

Yan Zhaoge finished his sentence for him. “And also, there is another person that we must be wary of.”

The two glanced at each other as they spoke in unison, “The Devil Saint, Yuan Tian!”

Out of the Eight Extremities World’s known six Martial Saints, one was the Devil Saint. Despite being a lone cultivator, he was a peak existence. He was also possibly involved with the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss.

When the incident at Clear Concealed Lake occurred, Yuan Tian obstructed the Sacred Sun Clan when they hurried to reinforce their forces with the Heaven Measuring Ruler. Afterwards, he disappeared without a trace. However, no one was foolish enough to think that it had been a coincidence.

This person’s power was on a level that far surpassed Sima Chui’s.

Or perhaps, it would be more apt to say that all of the Decimating Abyss’s forces that they had encountered up to this point wouldn’t even be able to stand up to a swat from the Devil Saint’s hand.

HSSB 266: Sikong Qing's Persistence

“Leader, member, ally, or perhaps assisting due to the owing of a debt?” Xu Fei said, “Or perhaps it was just Yuan Tian acting as he liked.”

“Whatever the reason, we need to be on guard against Yuan Tian. Our clan must take him into consideration in our following plans.”

Hearing his words, Yan Zhaoge nodded, “The Devil Saint Yuan Tian is indeed trouble; we have to be vigilant of him.”

Xu Fei said, “Zhaoge, you must be careful in the following period.”

His gaze fell on the devilish mark on the back of Yan Zhaoge's left hand, “As Master's cultivation base is after all higher, if the enemy wants to reopen the Sand Region's Great Nine Underworlds Door, they may very likely set their sights on you.”

Yan Zhaoge said straightforwardly, “Even if not for the Great Nine Underworlds Door, they might also focus on me. If I die, the pressure from the devilish mark will fall completely on eldest apprentice-uncle, in the process drawing his attention further. If they wanted to do something else then, it would be easier for them.”

Xu Fei's expression was rather grave, “That's right...”

He was an open and forthright person, but amidst his straightforwardness, he was also rather stable and mature, not fond of making suppositions, with some words not easily coming out of his mouth.

Yan Zhaoge, however, immediately understood what Xu Fei had left unspoken.

If there were still spies of the Decimating Abyss in Broad Creed Mountain, especially those whose cultivation base and strength were higher, if they wanted to assassinate Yan Zhaoge, it would be extremely covert, and very hard to guard against.

But they were also unable to look at everyone with suspicious gazes, or completely isolate Yan Zhaoge from everyone. Everything had to depend on the vigilance of Yan Zhaoge himself.

Yan Zhaoge patted Xu Fei's shoulder, "Relax, senior apprentice-brother Xu. I will be careful."

Saying thus, Yan Zhaoge smiled, "While I don't really like it, such trouble always seems to come looking for me. It looks like I am born to be bait-the clan can just set up a circle around me, to ambush and kill spies of the Decimating Abyss."

Xu Fei said solemnly, "While it is like this in principle, you will be bearing a great risk."

"I know that you, Zhaoge, have many unique treasures on you,

and do not fear Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmasters. But what if after getting close to you, an Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster suddenly erupts? You might not be in time to hold him off long enough for the experts lying around in ambush to reinforce.”

Xu Fei paused for a moment, his voice turning even more grave, “...if, it were an Essence Talisman Martial Grandmaster, there wouldn’t even be time to react.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “Senior apprentice-brother Xu, what you say is not wrong. It is indeed like this. However, the enemies are hidden while I am not-some things, we just cannot do anything about.”

“However, I will also not treat my life so lightly. While I do not intend to be quarantined, in this upcoming period, I will lessen solitary contact with the clan’s higher echelons. Other than a few select people, I will have to apologise to the other seniors. I believe that they should be able to understand.”

Xu Fei nodded, “It is good that you understand.”

After sending Xu Fei out, Yan Zhaoge did not directly return to his room, instead strolling towards the outside.

Passing through some forests, he came before a waterfall, silently watching the movements of the water there.

After who knew how long, as Yan Zhaoge prepared to turn to

leave, his heart suddenly moved slightly.

Gazing in a single direction, he saw a figure appear in the distance. It was a girl.

The girl had beautiful features, but a rather cold, aloof look about her. It was precisely Sikong Qing.

It was only when she had neared that Sikong Qing discovered Yan Zhaoge. Glancing over, she could only feel like Yan Zhaoge had merged to become one with his surrounding environment, making it hard for her to detect him.

“Senior apprentice-brother Yan,” Sikong Qing first bowed, and Yan Zhaoge nodded in return, “Junior apprentice-sister Sikong, it’s been a long time. Congratulations on your rapid progress in cultivation.”

As compared to back at Clear Concealed Lake during the Heavenly Connection Meet then, Sikong Qing had now already broken through from the inner aura to the outer aura Martial Scholar realm.

Yan Zhaoge could hear the flow of her blood, dense as mercury, yet still naturally flowing smoothly.

“Are you currently at the peak of the early outer aura stage, or have you already stepped into the mid outer aura stage, now able to condense qi into weaponry?” Yan Zhaoge asked somewhat

interestedly.

Sikong Qing answered, “Mid outer aura stage, already able to condense qi into weaponry.”

As she said this, she extended her hand, her aura-qi condensing into a sword which hovered by her side. It was precisely the trademark ability of mid outer aura Martial Scholars.

Yan Zhaoge sighed, “It hasn’t even been a year since we returned from Clear Concealed Lake, and you have already progressed rapidly to this point. Heaven truly doesn’t restrict geniuses.”

Sikong Qing shook her head, “As compared to senior apprentice-brother Yan’s speed from the late inner aura stage to the early outer aura stage, and then the mid outer aura stage previously, it is much slower.”

The corners of Yan Zhaoge’s lips curled slightly upwards, but he did not speak.

Sikong Qing’s situation was very special, very abnormal.

Before having become a Martial Scholar, while she was also extremely outstanding, it also wasn’t especially exaggerated, basically being around the average level of direct disciples of Sacred Grounds.

After becoming a Martial Scholar that year, her rapid

improvements had caused even Yan Zhaoge to take notice.

Amongst those of the same generation, her rate of improvement surpassed the original owner of Yan Zhaoge's body, surpassed Lu Wen, surpassed Xu Fei.

There was only Feng Yunsheng who was even slightly faster than her. However, Feng Yunsheng's situation was originally special, with the Extreme Yin Scripture and the yin-yang coexisting technique as well as the stimulation of the Cold Marrow Needles in recent days, all working together in unison.

Ying Longtu's rate of improvement was even more exaggerated, but that was because he had the Big Dipper Body, and was therefore able to pass through the Body Refinement realm rather more easily.

Having reached the Martial Scholar realm, while his improvement speed was still very great, it might also not be comparable to Sikong Qing's.

Curiosity was something possessed by everyone, and Yan Zhaoge was not an exception. However, he was only curious, and did not have any intentions of probing. After all, Sikong Qing was not an enemy.

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, Sikong Qing's gaze was a little strange.

Yan Zhaoge touched his own face, "What, have flowers bloomed

on my face?”

Sikong Qing shook her head, “No, it is just that looking at senior apprentice-brother Yan, I thought about some things.”

Yan Zhaoge found himself interested, “Oh? What things?”

“I personally experienced Clear Concealed Lake previously, and while I was not at Yunwu County in the Sand Region this time, I have also heard about it.” Sikong Qing said, “Senior apprentice-brother Yan accomplished what most Martial Grandmaster experts could not.”

“While from olden times up till now, I can’t say for sure whether you are the strongest Martial Scholar, you might just be the most capable Martial Scholar.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly, “Therefore?”

Sikong Qing said, “Therefore, I think that I need to change a little.”

“You doubt yourself?” Yan Zhaoge appraised her, “Doubt yourself for having had nothing else on your mind all along, not dabbling in formations, artifact forging as well as other auxiliary studies, instead being fully devoted to the martial dao, unsure on whether this path is truly the correct one?”

Sikong Qing said calmly, “No, I have never wavered.”

“I firmly believe that my path is not wrong. Although Clear Concealed Lake and the winds and rain about to descend on our clan now have made me feel insignificant and powerless, I have never ever doubted my choice.”

“My insignificance and powerlessness just stem from me being too weak.”

Looking at Sikong Qing, Yan Zhaoge saw a seldom seen shine in her eyes as she continued, “What I feel is that the environment I have been in has always been too safe.”

“Educated under the protection of the clan, while it is also a productive form of cultivation, while I can say that I have been cultivating diligently, it has still been too safe.”

Sikong Qing looked straight at Yan Zhaoge, “I want to go out for a bit; going a little further than is safe, going to experience more things, tempering myself, with life and death up to the heavens.”

HSSB 267: Advancing Towards The Martial Grandmaster Realm

Looking at Sikong Qing, Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly.

Yan Zhaoge did not disagree with Sikong Qing's intentions.

After all, this was a world of martial practitioners. When one possessed unparalleled power, everything else became insignificant in comparison.

The most straightforward example was the Devil Saint Yuan Tian. Not requiring any other methods, just standing there, he already intimidated.

In the current Eight Extremities World, a Martial Saint had the ability and worth to ignore most rules. Most of the time, it was only other existences at the same level which could restrict them.

As Sikong Qing said, she found herself powerless more because her current cultivation base was still low.

Actually, she couldn't be blamed on this. Looking at her age and time spent cultivating, she had already surpassed countless people. It was just that she had been swept up in a situation which her cultivation base and strength were insufficient to deal with.

Most tragedies in this world actually stemmed from this.

From a certain perspective, Yan Zhaoge was in the same situation as well. It was just that he had other methods for dealing with things.

And it was precisely because he could always solve problems that, by common logic, were unsolvable for someone of his current cultivation base and strength, that Yan Zhaoge possessed his current status and fame.

Looking at Sikong Qing, Yan Zhaoge said, “Earlier, when you went out for tempering, while there would always be people leading you, on the whole, they would leave you be except in life or death crises. The clan also takes into account the effect of tempering.”

Sikong Qing said, “Even so, we would still have some feelings of reliance within our hearts.”

She looked at the distant waterfall, listening to the rumbling sound of the water, “Being able to be where she is today, those two solitary years of being murderously pursued was very important for senior apprentice-sister Feng.”

“Although, that was not a good thing.”

Yan Zhaoge knew that what Sikong Qing spoke of had nothing at all to do with Feng Yunsheng’s Extreme Yin Physique, as well as the Cold Marrow Needles and Extreme Yin Scripture.

What she was referring to was Feng Yunsheng's great strength that far surpassed those of the same generation.

While being due to talent, it was also due to experience. Feng Yunsheng's strength in actual combat generally far surpassed those at the same cultivation level.

As Yan Zhaoge knew, both being disciples of Fu Enshu, Feng Yunsheng and Sikong Qing sparred quite a bit.

This pair of apprentice-sisters was rather interesting. Feng Yunsheng addressed Sikong Qing as 'senior apprentice-sister Sikong', while Sikong Qing referred to Feng Yunsheng as 'senior apprentice-sister Feng'.

There were obviously no tensions or conflict with the two.

Feng Yunsheng addressed the younger Sikong Qing as senior apprentice-sister because she had entered the clan later.

While the reason Sikong Qing addressed Feng Yunsheng as senior apprentice-sister was very simple.

With no grudges or enmity as fellow disciples, with it not to the extent of life and death battles, sparring at the same cultivation level, Feng Yunsheng always beat Sikong Qing by a bit.

If it was a life and death battle, Feng Yunsheng's advantage would be even greater.

Yan Zhaoge was of no mind to interfere in Sikong Qing's decision as he smiled, "In having such thoughts, you are also being of one mind to the martial dao, striving for improvement. I naturally have no objections on this. While I shall not speak for others, for you, perhaps this is indeed a viable path."

"However, firstly, you had best ask for senior apprentice-aunt Fu's opinion before making your decision, and secondly, even if you are going, you should also wait for Grand Master to leave seclusion first. It is better to speak of it after everything has been settled, with there being so many things going on now."

Hearing his words, Sikong Qing nodded, "Senior apprentice-brother Yan's words make sense; I understand."

She cupped her hands towards Yan Zhaoge, taking her leave.

Looking at Sikong Qing's back, Yan Zhaoge sighed rather emotionally, "A hundred vessels seeking the flow-who can emerge victorious of them?"

Shaking his head, Yan Zhaoge returned to his dwelling.

Speaking of diligence in cultivation, raising one's strength and cultivation base, Yan Zhaoge's desires had never been weaker than anyone's.

While he had been basking in the limelight these past days, having achieved something major that most Martial Grandmasters wouldn't be able to do, Yan Zhaoge's inner desire for self-improvement still blazed much more strongly than most.

Returning to his room, Yan Zhaoge sat down in the meditative position, modulating his aura-qi unceasingly, a spiritual light shooting up to the heavens from above his head.

Raising his left hand, Yan Zhaoge inspected the devilish mark on its back, unceasingly analysing and researching into the concept within.

Within his dantian, the chaotic qi mass was still hazy.

After moderating his condition for a moment, Yan Zhaoge gradually retracted the spiritual light above his head, before retrieving a certain something.

It was a stone whose surface resembled a mirror. It was not transparent, instead appearing dusty.

But as Yan Zhaoge's gaze landed on it, radiance seemed to flicker on the surface of the stone, illuminating his features.

It was precisely the Life Illuminating Immortal Stone that Yan Zhaoge had obtained in that foreign dimension in which Loose Practitioner He had once resided.

The typical use of this treasure, as most of before the Great Calamity knew, was illuminating the circulation routes of one's aura-qi in their cultivation, showing it to others.

In other words, its main use was actually for the teaching of disciples.

In circulating their aura-qi, those of the senior generation would use the aura-qi circulation routes as shown on the Life Illuminating Immortal Stones as demonstration for those of the younger generation, letting them observe and comprehend it.

However, Yan Zhaoge knew that there was still another use for this treasure.

He extended his finger, gently swiping it across the surface of the Life Illuminating Immortal Stone, tracing the veins within. Different scenes instantly appeared on the surface of the stone.

The originally dusty stone actually gradually became clear and transparent at this moment, resembling a crystal, resembling a true mirror surface.

Spiritual light rose up once more from above Yan Zhaoge's head, just that scenes also seemed to rise up from within, appearing exceptionally unique.

In the following days, Yan Zhaoge immersed himself in

cultivation once more.

He either spent his time cultivating, unceasingly increasing his accumulation in preparation for his breakthrough into the Martial Grandmaster realm, analysed the devilish mark on the back of his left hand, or forged the Devil Shattering Arrows with his Internal Crystal Furnace a step further.

Time passed by in a flash, with quite some time already having passed since the old Chief, Yuan Zhengfeng had entered seclusion.

Broad Creed Mountain was operating as per usual, with Yan Di already having fully slipped into his new role, whilst in the outside world, whether it was the Sacred Sun Clan or the Decimating Abyss, they had also yet to make any major movements for the time being.

At this moment, everyone seemed to be of one mind, eagerly awaiting Yuan Zhengfeng successfully leaving seclusion, having successfully stepped into the Martial Saint realm.

However, whether it was Yan Zhaoge or Yan Di or the others, they all knew that this was but a mirage, just the final calm before the storm.

One day, Yan Zhaoge sat peacefully within his room, the surface of the transparent Life Illuminating Immortal Stone that resembled a crystal already riddled with cracks, resembling thin, dense spiderwebs.

Yan Zhaoge's expression was calm as he extended his finger, tapping on the Life Illuminating Immortal Stone once.

The stone that resembled a crystal soundlessly shattered, reduced into smithereens, then turning into dust, dissipating into the air as if it had never existed.

While the spiritual light above Yan Zhaoge's head surged greatly.

His entire body, every single acupoint, seemed to be emanating radiance.

Bathed completely in this radiance, Yan Zhaoge's illusory aura-qi seemed to transform into true auspicious clouds at this moment, the backdrop to his body.

The bright spiritual light above Yan Zhaoge's head now began to slowly retract into the crown of his head, as the light emanated from his entire body grew denser.

This day, Yan Zhaoge officially stepped into the ranks of Martial Grandmasters!

HSSB 268: The Calm Before The Storm, Ends!

Yan Zhaoge's entire body emanated golden radiance, his aura-qi roiling as he seemed to be surrounded by auspicious clouds.

All the acupoints of his entire body pulsed, a shocking power radiating from within his body.

One could faintly see numerous coiled true dragons made of qi; partially obscured within the auspicious clouds, they let out loud, domineering roars in unison.

Two auras, one icy cold, one fiery hot, were no longer distinct at this moment as only a vigorous strength could be felt.

Yan Zhaoge's closed eyes now opened.

The auspicious clouds around him that were flickering with radiance seemed to gradually retract their glow at this moment, those aura-qis that resembled numerous dragons also calming.

The dazzling clouds gradually calmed, finally losing their lustre.

Yan Zhaoge's aura now vaguely felt hard to pinpoint. He was clearly there, but it seemed like he was part of the background, making one unable to determine his position, before and after, up or down.

Time and space seemed to lose all meaning at this moment, with only chaos remaining.

The mass of qi around Yan Zhaoge's body shockingly seemed like the scene within his dantian's qi ocean at this moment.

At this moment, the spiritual light above Yan Zhaoge's head had completely vanished. Meanwhile, the light within his eyes had also been completely retracted, now appearing completely ordinary.

The chaotic qi mass formed of aura-qi around his entire body also gradually returned through his acupoints.

As he stood up, Yan Zhaoge resembled a famed sword renowned throughout the world being sheathed.

The blade of the sword was not blunt, but its sharpness was hidden, just having been temporarily put away. It would appear when it once again became necessary, erupting with a force even greater than before.

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly, only feeling that his aura-qi was filled with spirituality, even more concealed, even more condensed, even more vigorous, and even heavier.

He vaguely felt that his understanding towards cultivating in the martial dao had increased.

His comprehension and all he had learnt in his past life merged

with his martial dao-a road of improvement was already vaguely visible before his eyes.

Yan Zhaoge knew that that was his true martial soul. Now that he had a foundation for growth, it was only a matter of awaiting unceasing accumulation and analysis before finally comprehension and improvement was achieved.

And at this moment, he had already successfully stepped into the Martial Scholar realm!

It was like a great door had opened before him, letting him stride into a completely new heaven and earth.

The Martial Grandmaster realm, the early Spirit Vessel stage.

The aura-qi's spirituality resuming simplicity, the fist-intent turning from illusory to real a step further, beginning to form spirit soil.

This was precisely the foundation of Martial Grandmasters. The spirit soil formed of Yan Zhaoge's fist-intent was like the chaos within his dantian's qi ocean, profound and unpredictable.

Yan Zhaoge moderated his condition for a moment longer, before opening the door and walking out.

Ah Hu was currently waiting outside, as he immediately saw that the spiritual light above Yan Zhaoge's head that was connected to

the heavens had vanished.

According to Yan Zhaoge's personality, other than in very few unique situations, he would never retract the spiritual light above his head.

At this moment, however, the spiritual light had vanished. Appraising Yan Zhaoge carefully, Ah Hu felt his entire body's acupoints pulsing, as though there was a true god that connected the interior and exterior of his body.

As someone who himself had experienced it once before, after first being slightly stunned for a moment, Ah Hu then rejoiced, overjoyed, "Young Master, you've successfully stepped into the Martial Grandmaster realm!"

Yan Zhaoge smiled, "New starting point, new beginning."

Ah Hu praised from the bottom of his heart, "Young Master, you very nearly broke Family Head's record for the youngest Martial Grandmaster."

"If we count from the time you became an early outer aura Martial Scholar to now, you have used even less time than the Family Head!"

Usually, in speaking such words, Ah Hu still had some intent of toadying up to Yan Zhaoge. However, at this moment, it was admiration from the bottom of his heart, as he could only feel like

it was inconceivable.

Don't look at how the big guy usually had on a wide grin on his face, following servilely behind Yan Zhaoge wherever he went.

He was only this way with Yan Zhaoge and Yan Di.

Faced with other people, while he still remained jovial on the surface, he, Ah Hu, Huang Huting, actually also had his own pride within his heart, resembling a ferocious tiger of the mountains.

However, currently seeing Yan Zhaoge having already stepped into the Martial Grandmaster realm at such a young age, Ah Hu could only sigh in admiration.

This had completely nothing to do with Yan Zhaoge's identity, and was purely admiration of how remarkable Yan Zhaoge was.

Yan Zhaoge smiled, "Father became a Martial Grandmaster at the age of twenty-two; breaking this record is not an easy thing. Of those I currently know, there's only Han Long'er who might be able to do so."

He looked at Ah Hu, "Right, seeing how you are, you must have been specially waiting for me here. Is there anything urgent?"

Ah Hu nodded, grinning as his white teeth were bared wide, vaguely seeming a little savage.

“Young Master, there seems to be instability at home.”

Hearing his words, Yan Zhaoge raised his brows slightly, “Oh? At home...”

The home that Ah Hu spoke of naturally didn't refer to the Zhao Region's Yan Family in the Thunder Domain, but instead referred to the Central Heaven Region's Yan Family where Yan Zhaoge had been born.

That year, when the Central Heaven Region Yan Family had fragmented out, avoiding the threat of the Zhao Region Yan Family, they had travelled a long way before arriving in the Heaven Domain, finally settling down in the Central Heaven Region.

The Central Heaven Region was where Broad Creed Mountain's headquarters were. Here, it was not allowed for other first-rate powers to exist. At most, only some second-rate powers were allowed to develop here.

There were only two exceptions, one being the Yan Family of Yan Zhaoge and Yan Di and the other the Zhang Family of the Grand Elder, Elder Zhang.

Because of Yan Di and Elder Zhang, these two families were rooted in the Central Heaven Region. However, comparatively speaking, they kept quite a low profile.

A tall tree provides good shade. Accompanied by Yan Di's increase in cultivation base and position, the Central Heaven Region Yan Family had also become a famed power of the Eight Extremities World.

Of course, the Zhao Region Yan Family refused to acknowledge this, but the Central Heaven Region Yan Family also didn't care whether or not they were acknowledged by them.

The Yan Family's current head was Yan Zhaoge's father, Yan Di.

However, Yan Di spent most of his time at Broad Creed Mountain, his position as an Elder of Broad Creed Mountain far, far more significant than that of Yan Family Head.

As a result, the common matters of the Family were generally mostly handed by its Elders, who then reported on them to Yan Di.

"In what way is there instability at home?" Yan Zhaoge looked like he was smiling whilst also not.

His expression savage, Ah Hu replied, "Some people run off their tongues, doubting Family Head to be the old Head's true son, in the meantime also being rude to Young Master and insulting the Madam."

Yan Zhaoge laughed coldly, but was not angered, "Now this is interesting. Seeing father's position in Broad Creed Mountain rise

a step further, with hopes of succeeding the position of Chief, they act not to firmly get into his good books but instead using this time to cause trouble?”

“First not mentioning how unbelievable those nasty rumours are; even if they are true, it would also be the rational choice now to stand on father’s side, even helping him to destroy the evidence, quelling any conflict.”

“The stronger father is, the more stable his position, the more stable the Yan Family’s position in the Central Heaven Region also is. As the boat rises higher, the benefits also increase. Jumping up to cause trouble now-really, are they silly?”

Yan Zhaoge murmured to himself, “And if they are not silly at all, that can only mean one thing.”

“With father temporarily taking up the position of Broad Creed Mountain’s Chief, he has lots of things to do, and does not have any time to spare. However, such matters of having fire in one’s own backyard is something that cannot be ignored-how can someone whose own home is unstable be fit to manage Broad Creed Mountain’s affairs?”

“With others also not suited to suppress this, as his trueborn son, there would be none more suited than I to return home to handle the matter.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled coldly, gazing into the distance, “Indeed, the calm before the storm has ended. The other side is ready to move.”

HSSB 269: Returning Home To Quell Chaos

Ah Hu asked, “It is the other side’s trap, their foremost motive being the assassination of Young Master?”

Yan Zhaoge said mildly, “This is a matter of the Yan Family, and others are not suited to handle it. With father not being able to, there is only me who can return.”

Ah Hu looked at Yan Zhaoge, “Young Master, then you’ll...”

“Return,” Yan Zhaoge said like nothing was the matter, “I must return, of course.”

After sorting out some matters, Yan Zhaoge walked to the back courtyard, where Pan-Pan was currently lying down, resting.

Seeing Yan Zhaoge, Pan-Pan immediately grew alert, no longer lazy as he had been.

Yan Zhaoge patted his huge head as he asked Ah Hu, “Father already knows of this matter?”

Ah Hu answered, “Yes, Family Head already knows.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, “Good, it’s fine then; father will naturally have arrangements made. Let’s return.”

Descending the Earth Descending Peak, leaving the clan, Yan Zhaoge flipped himself up onto Pan-Pan, Ah Hu also doing the same.

The Pan-Pan who looked foolish and simple as well as chubby and clumsy got on all fours and ran, actually resembling swift wind and speeding lightning as they were far away in an instant.

Yan Zhaoge's figure bobbed up and down alongside Pan-Pan's movements as he gazed into the distance, seemingly considering something.

He lowered his head to look at the back of his left hand. The devilish mark there was already extremely faint. Under normal circumstances, it wouldn't take long before it completely dissipated.

Ah Hu glanced at it, "Young Master, do you think it's the Decimating Abyss or the Sacred Sun Clan behind this this time?"

Yan Zhaoge answered, "It's more probable that it is the Decimating Abyss. The Sacred Sun Clan firstly has been waiting for Huang Guanglie to emerge from seclusion, and secondly also does not have such strong infiltrative powers."

"However..." Yan Zhaoge's gaze was rather deep and distant, "Whether they are in the know is a completely different matter altogether. The Sacred Sun Clan might be waiting for us and the Decimating Abyss to wound each other gravely, therefore giving them a great chance to invade even with Huang Guanglie yet to

leave seclusion.”

Ah Hu pulled back the corners of his lips, “The two wouldn’t have teamed up, right?”

Yan Zhaoge said, “They shouldn’t have teamed up-the Sacred Sun Clan should still not be to the extent of doing something like that with completely no bottom line at all. However, they may very well be eyeing us greedily, waiting to get both us and them in one fell swoop.”

“Following the matter of the Wind Domain, I found out some things. In this current world, not mentioning their level of understanding towards the Nine Underworlds, the Sacred Sun Clan should be the one possessing the greatest understanding of the Decimating Abyss as an organisation.”

Yan Zhaoge shook his head, “Both sides have respectively been pulling over remnants of Black Nightmare Mountain to their sides, but it may be that this has formlessly also formed a channel that allows the two to understand each other.”

Ah Hu scratched the back of his head, “...both attempting to use the other, killing with a borrowed knife?”

Yan Zhaoge said, “It’s just my guess, with no substantive proof.”

The foundation of the Central Heaven Region Yans was established at Yunzhen County, at the southwest of the Central

Heaven Region. It was also a distance away from Broad Creed Mountain.

Even with Pan-Pan, it was also quite a while before Yan Zhaoge arrived.

Entering the territory of Yunzhen County, there was already someone waiting for him there. It was a middle-aged man, with the cultivation of a mid Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster. His name was Yan He.

Seeing Yan He, Yan Zhaoge ignored formalities, cutting to the chase, “Uncle He, what is it?”

“Not long ago, at a family banquet, Fourth Uncle suddenly took out a letter, claiming that it was written by Eldest Uncle before his death,” Yan He also ignored formalities, speaking whilst guiding Yan Zhaoge forward, “The contents of the letter...were that Brother Di is not Eldest Uncle’s trueborn son, instead having been adopted when he was young, his true origins unclear.”

Yan Zhaoge’s expression did not change as he listened calmly.

The Eldest Uncle whom Yan He spoke of was Yan Di’s father and Yan Zhaoge’s grandfather, having perished during their journey over from the Zhao Region to the Heaven Domain.

At that time, Yan Di was still young, and Yan Zhaoge had yet to exist in this world.

Afterwards, Yan Zhaoge's great-grandfather, Yan Di's grandfather, had led their entire family in taking up root in the Heaven Domain, with Yan Di eventually becoming a disciple of Broad Creed Mountain, rising up step by step, also causing the position of the Central Heaven Region Yans to rise.

After the previous Head, Yan Di's grandfather, died, his position had not been passed down to his sons, instead having been directly succeeded by his grandson Yan Di.

Currently, Yan Di's Third Uncle, Fourth Uncle and Seventh Uncle were all still of this world.

Usually, with Yan Di in Broad Creed Mountain, the daily matters of the Central Heaven Region Yans were discussed and handled by these few Elders.

Yan He sighed, "I don't know what Fourth Uncle was thinking, in blowing the matter up till everyone knew of it, even persisting that this matter must be investigated thoroughly. Unable to suppress him, Third Uncle and Seventh Uncle could only inform Brother Di."

Of the few Elders of the Family, Yan Zhaoge's Third Granduncle and Fourth Granduncle were both Essence Spirit Martial Grandmasters, while his Seventh Uncle was in the mid Spirit Vessel stage.

"Father is currently temporarily assuming the position of Chief,

busy with many matters and unable to come,” Yan Zhaoge said succinctly, “Therefore, I came back this time to see what exactly was up.”

While Yan Zhaoge’s age and seniority were low, he was the trueborn son of Yan Di, at the same time also possessing great fame in the Eight Extremities World, with a position in Broad Creed Mountain that was not low.

Even the Elders of the Family were unable to lightly suppress him on grounds of seniority.

Yan He said, “It is also good that you could return. At least quell the matter first; don’t let it continue to grow.”

Arriving at the ancestral mansion, not yet having entered, they could already feel a tense atmosphere of drawn swords and strung bows.

Raising his head, Yan Zhaoge saw winds and clouds surging in the air above, a terrifying force sweeping the area. It was clearly from a confrontation between two Essence Spirit Martial Grandmasters.

Entering the mansion, after passing through the numerous courtyards, they indeed saw two old men currently at a standstill, their expressions both stern as they remained silent.

Behind them were their various supporters, currently in the

midst of a heated argument.

“Could it be that all of you have gone mad? Jumping out at this time to hold the Head back-what exactly are your intentions?”

Someone on Yan Di’s side glared angrily at the other side’s people.

The other side rebutted righteously, “Not being legitimate at all, Yan Di did not come by his position properly.”

“When our entire Family moved to the Heaven Domain that year, his parents both died, with him surviving an orphan, and no one able to know what exactly happened at that time. Now, words from the pen of his father written to the old Head have revealed the truth of the matter-Yan Di is not a true descendant of my Yan Family!”

“His parents dying that year-who knows if it was his own handiwork, in order to conceal his identity as he conspires against our Family?”

Those on Yan Di’s side were angered to the point of laughing, “Able to be where he is today, the Head has relied on his own superior talent. In choosing him as successor, the old Head was also looking at his ability.”

“After entering Broad Creed Mountain that year, in soaring straight up into the clouds, the Head didn’t borrow much of our

Family's power. On the contrary, as his position gradually increased, it was our Family that benefited as a result."

"All of you bear resentment within your hearts, probably because you blame the Head for his strict rules, not allowing you to flaunt a non-existent authority based upon his achievements!"

Hearing this, the other party gave a cold snort, "First not speaking of whether Yan Di was wrong, the truth of his parents' deaths has to be investigated clearly. His origins also have to be properly determined; someone of unclear origins becoming the head of a Family-really, what a joke."

"It is the same for his son Yan Zhaoge; his mother's identity is not clear, who knows where she came from..."

Before he had finished, a figure flickered, appearing before him.

It was precisely Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge smiled carelessly, "The identity of the person urging you on-I am also very interested in it."

That person stabilised his mind, "Yan Zhaoge, you've come at just the right time. The Family's Elders have questions for you..."

"Bang!"

The next moment, the person was sent flying backwards.

Yan Zhaoge flexed his leg, “Other than answering my question, you have no right to be saying anything else.”

HSSB 270: I Am The Family's Laws!

When Yan Zhaoge appeared, the two opposing Elders had already discovered his arrival, just that they were held up by each other, and did not have the time to deal with him.

When Yan Zhaoge sent that person flying with a single kick, the Elder on the right finally could stand it no longer, “Yan Zhaoge!”

“What your position is at Broad Creed Mountain is another matter. Daring to behave so audaciously in the ancestral mansion—do you truly think that you cannot be held accountable by the Family's laws?”

Yan Zhaoge looked calmly at this old man, “Yan Wendao, at this critical moment for Broad Creed Mountain and my father, what attitude do you feel I should have towards you people who stir up trouble, possessing unwholesome thoughts?”

Hearing Yan Zhaoge directly addressing him by his name, his Fourth Granduncle, Yan Wendao, was enraged, “This little brat!”

As an Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster, his rage truly had the dominance of mountains collapsing.

As his roiling true essence circulated, numerous streaks of light seemed to transform into a scaly dragon, coiling by his side.

Striding out, he was already before Yan Zhaoge, striking out with

a palm.

By the side, a similar force surged, as the Third Granduncle whom he had been standing off against earlier, Yan Wenzhen, came before Yan Zhaoge and raised up a palm, which was also accompanied by a scaly dragon.

The two longtime Elders and Essence Spirit Martial Grandmasters of the Yan Family clashed head-on!

While caring for this ancestral mansion, the two did not dare to completely release their power, with their clash seeming completely ordinary and without waves, everyone here seemed to feel a strong light rise before their eyes, the world before their eyes completely turning white.

A deafening roar resounded beside their ears, with other sounds all no longer audible.

Some Yan Family martial practitioners with lower cultivation bases directly and uncontrollably collapsed.

Yan Wendao glared furiously at Yan Wenzhen, “Just from him as a junior daring to speak to this old man like this, this old man wants to invoke the Family’s laws today; even Yan Di can have no reason to shelter him!”

Yan Wenzhen’s expression was calm, “Old Fourth. I am also very interested in who the people standing behind you are.”

“The Sacred Sun Clan? Broad Creed Mountain’s Elder Fang? The Zhao Region Yans and the Heavenly Thunder Hall? Or perhaps... the Decimating Abyss?”

The two exchanged blows once more, their foreheads each lighting up with a spirit pattern.

The spirit patterns floated up into the air, instantly expanding, as the entire Yan Family ancestral mansion also shook alongside them.

Countless patterns of white light, resembling numerous scaly dragons, roared as they soared into the air.

A massive spirit formation that enveloped the entire Yan Family ancestral mansion instantly took form.

It was just that the circulation of the formation was clearly unstable, seeming as though it could split into two at any moment.

Yan Wendao and Yan Wenzhen both glared at each other.

As longtime Elders of the Yan Family at the level of Essence Spirit Martial Grandmasters, the two usually held control over the Yan Family Grand Formation together. Currently, with the battle just happening to be between the two of them, the formation could also not be properly used, instead becoming the focal point of the two’s conflict.

Seeing that he was temporarily unable to do anything to Yan Wenzhen, Yan Wendao's figure suddenly flashed, continuing to lunge towards Yan Zhaoge!

His strength was comparable to Yan Wenzhen's. One wanting to kill, the other wanting to protect, the former would inevitably hold the initiative as well as the advantage.

"Little brat, you need to pay for your arrogance!" Yan Wendao roared coldly.

Looking silently at Yan Wendao, Yan Zhaoge suddenly laughed, "Yan Wendao, you seemed to have gotten something wrong."

Saying thus, he gently tapped his forehead, where a shining spirit pattern also appeared!

"At this place and this moment in time, at least, speaking of the Family's laws, I am them."

Accompanied by the spirit pattern on Yan Zhaoge's forehead lighting up, the grand formation guarding the ancestral mansion instantly shook.

The next moment, the flickering spirit patterns on Yan Wendao's and Yan Wenzhen's foreheads shockingly dissipated.

Yan Wenzhen was fine with it, but Yan Wendao's heart immediately sunk.

The Head of the Yan Family, Yan Di, was the true controller of the Yan Family Grand Formation!

With Yan Di's help, Yan Zhaoge now clearly also held control over the formation.

And this young man's attainment in formations far surpassed them old fellas, far surpassed them Essence Spirit Martial Grandmasters!

Yan Zhaoge laughed lightly, pushing his hands forward, palms facing downwards, fingers spread out, before he abruptly pressed downwards.

The ancestral mansion instantly reacted, the courtyard in which they were located instantly being filled with white light, numerous dragons of light soaring, all lunging towards Yan Wendao!

Helpless, Yan Wendao could only resist.

However, letting out a long howl, the Yan Wenzhen behind him, palms outstretched, was already speeding over in attack.

Faced with the combined forces of the grand formation and Yan Wenzhen, Yan Wendao was instantly unable to cope with the situation, finding it hard to hold on.

To his shock, he discovered something. Under Yan Zhaoge's control, the Yan Family Grand Formation actually unleashed its peak power, actually not inferior to when it was being controlled by them Essence Spirit Martial Grandmasters at all.

The grand formation was even more powerful than him, Yan Wendao. Without Yan Wenzhen's help, he was hard pressed to withstand it, at most only able to struggle and hold on for a bit longer.

Yan Zhaoge said mildly, "Setting up a trap to lure me in, the troops lying in ambush should also be appearing now? Otherwise, the bait is going to be used up."

Before his words had landed, a few dark shadows had already rushed out from amongst the crowd, lunging towards Yan Zhaoge together.

"So it is the Decimating Abyss," Yan Zhaoge's expression didn't change as he extended his hands, palms facing each other as they abruptly clapped together.

Accompanied by this clap of Yan Zhaoge's, the power of the Yan Family Grand Formation surged madly, the numerous light dragons combining, forming a massive dragon head, surveying its surroundings.

The dragon head suddenly opened its mouth, letting out a shocking roar, causing the assaulting martial practitioners to all

stop in their tracks, their figures drifting, as though about to collapse of drunkenness.

Waving his hand, a short stone rod flew out of Yan Zhaoge's hands, transforming into the massive pillar of the Divine Palace, suppressing his enemies.

Beside him, Ah Hu was grinning savagely as he rushed out, killing enemies left and right like a tiger amidst a herd of lambs.

As someone attacked from behind him, the Immortal Crane Wings on Yan Zhaoge suddenly expanded, feathers shooting out in all directions like a tempestuous storm.

The people who had been suppressed by the Yan Family Grand Formation were all of Yan Wendao's side, with the others, like Yan Zhaoge's Seventh Granduncle and Yan He, all not affected.

While looking at Yan Zhaoge currently quelling the internal rebellion like the sweeping of autumn leaves, some Yan Family martial practitioners felt a little conflicted within their hearts, they were also stimulated by Yan Zhaoge's clear vision of the enemy and thunderbolt-like methods, as they all simultaneously began their assault.

Other powers were all fine, but those of the Decimating Abyss were the enemy of all. Towards those of their Family, they prioritised their capture, but towards those Decimating Abyss martial practitioners attempting to attack Yan Zhaoge, they showed no mercy at all.

At Yan Zhaoge's hands, a chaotic situation seemed soon to be resolved.

However, the hearts of everyone here could not relax at all. After all, this was an internal dispute of the Family, not being any glorious at all.

After killing an opponent, Yan He retreated to Yan Zhaoge's side, asking him in a low tone, "Those Decimating Abyss martial practitioners who infiltrated aside, what about Fourth Uncle and the others?"

"Just capture them first," Yan Zhaoge swivelled his head to look in the direction of Yan Wendao.

Just having looked over, Yan Zhaoge suddenly felt a chill envelop him!

Through the corner of his eyes, he saw Yan He currently smiling coldly at him, a strange box opening within his hands from which a cold qi emanated.

Swept by the cold qi, Yan Zhaoge's right eye felt a piercing pain, flickering with the purple light of thunder yet seemingly having temporarily grown numb, falling silent for a moment.

"Yan Zhaoge, if you want to speak of the Family's laws, you also lack the qualifications," Yan He smiled coldly, stabbing viciously

towards Yan Zhaoge with the sword in his hands.

Ah Hu was a bit further away, unable to make it in time. Swept by the cold qi, Yan Zhaoge couldn't even activate the Golden Talismanic Body, seemingly about to die at Yan He's sword.

He, however, smiled slightly, "At this time and at this place, and with all those who are currently here, I am the Family's laws."

Saying thus, Yan Zhaoge flipped his palm, smashing mightily towards Yan He's head!

HSSB 271: You're Still Sorely Lacking

Yan Zhaoge raised his palm high above his head, then flipped it around, slamming downwards.

Great in scale, his movements were clumsy while heavy, not looking swift at all, instead seeming a little slow.

However, a strange, terrified feeling arose in the heart of Yan He before him, as though however he evaded or resisted, he would also not be able to escape from this palm of Yan Zhaoge's, his brain being blown to smithereens.

That feeling was as though all of heaven and earth lay within Yan Zhaoge's palm.

Accompanied by the flipping of Yan Zhaoge's palm, heaven and earth reversed, the heavens plummeting downwards from up above, with no way to escape, no way to resist, one only able to silently accept their impending death.

As this palm descended, from Yan He's perspective, Yan Zhaoge's entire person seemed much taller than he had previously been, resembling a descended divinity.

The majestic, mighty force enveloped Yan He's entire body, the heavy, dense aura-qi directly locking down the entire area about him, the very space around him seemingly collapsing with him as the centre.

Of Broad Creed Mountain's Three Supreme Arts, the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm!

As that one palm descended, it resembled the descent of the heavens!

Yan He forcibly kept himself alert, withstanding the pressure and destruction that the intent harboured within this palm brought to his mind, as he unconsciously raised a hand.

He believed that as a mid Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster, he would at least not be so easily defeated by Yan Zhaoge.

His secret treasure, the Dim Cold Miasma, temporarily sealing all of Yan Zhaoge's treasures, he would have a chance...

Yan He's thoughts not ending, Yan Zhaoge's palm had already descended, slamming onto his palm.

Without any resistance whatsoever, from his palm, the bones of Yan He's entire body began to shatter!

He stared, yet discovering that he had no way to resist it at all, resembling the dust that solely remained following the collapse and descent of the heavens!

Looking calmly at Yan He, Yan Zhaoge said mildly, "I do have a

few more treasures than most, and this seems to have let people overlook my personal strength. My current cultivation base is still rather low, but in terms of that, in assassinating me, you, at least, are still sorely lacking.”

While Yan He’s cultivation base was that of a mid Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster, any random Sacred Ground direct disciple at the early Spirit Vessel stage would also have the ability to surpass levels and defeat him.

As one who virtually presided over all geniuses of the same generation even amongst Sacred Grounds, even having only just stepped into the Martial Grandmaster realm, killing Yan He was but a simple matter for Yan Zhaoge.

Even if Yan He launched a sneak attack, this result was still set in stone!

Yan He had on a defeated expression, his gaze turning lax.

Yan Zhaoge was already no longer looking at him, instead looking at that box that was filled with Dim Cold Miasma.

The cold qi had already completely dissipated at this moment, what had originally only been used to buy a sliver of time for his assassination now having dissipated into the air.

On the other side, Yan Wendao was also already being suppressed by Yan Wenzhen, with defeat but a matter of time. With the Yan

Family Grand Formation present, escaping was but a far-fetched hope for him.

All the enemies here were either slain on the spot, or captured alive.

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, the Yan Family martial practitioners all felt somewhat shocked.

Martial Grandmaster ah; ever since Yan Zhaoge's father Yan Di, this world had not again seen a Martial Grandmaster emerge under the age of twenty-five, till this Yan Zhaoge before them!

Over these two years, Yan Zhaoge had soared straight up into the heavens, with the momentum of his rise even more exaggerated than his father Yan Di's had been.

With the cultivation of a Martial Scholar, in a Sacred Ground like Broad Creed Mountain, possessing the authority of a First Seat Elder, his authority and status seemingly even presiding over the leaders of all this world's first-rate powers.

From ancient times to now-how many had there been?

These few years, Yan Zhaoge had not returned to Yunzhen County where the Yan Family ancestral mansion was located, with those of the Yan Family always feeling like his accomplishments seemed a little illusory as a result.

Not having witnessed it personally, only having heard rumours, it was only natural for them to underestimate his actual capabilities.

And truly witnessing Yan Zhaoge live in action today, the great shock that it caused was such that all of them, even those like Yan Wenzhen who supported Yan Di, were rendered speechless.

Yan Zhaoge was already no longer concerned about Yan Wendao and his cronies as after nodding in appreciation to Yan Wenzhen and the others, he raised his head to look at the sky, “It is not as strong as the plan of Yao Shan’s group back in the desert, feeling more like it was planned out by Yan Wendao and Yan He alone.”

“For the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss then, where is the true killing move?”

Despite his view being obstructed by numerous courtyards, Yan Zhaoge still swivelled his head, looking towards the northeast where Broad Creed Mountain lay.

.....

The old Chief Yuan Zhengfeng having been in seclusion for many days, Broad Creed Mountain was currently in an orderly state, everyone seemingly already having gotten used to the days of the old Chief in seclusion and Yan Di temporarily taking up position at the helm.

Everything seemed no different from how it was usually.

But actually, Broad Creed Mountain was very tense internally, with its higher echelon experts all keeping vigilant at every moment, with even the mid and low-tier martial practitioners able to feel the unusual mood in the air.

Ending his cultivation session, Xu Fei left his residence, raising his head and looking up at the sky.

Today's sky was not as bright as it usually was, being a gloomy day, yet not giving people a cool, refreshing feeling, instead feeling a little stiflingly hot.

Dark clouds filled the sky in the air above Broad Creed Mountain, causing one's mood to be a little low.

Xu Fei knit his brows slightly, calming his heart as he strolled through a forest.

Along the way, he was spotted by several junior apprentice-brothers and sisters, who all bowed, "Senior apprentice-brother Xu."

Xu Fei nodded to them in return, continuing on his walk. Now, Xu Fei's footsteps suddenly slowed as he looked towards the roadside.

There stood a white-clothed, blue-robed young female disciple,

currently with a face full of worry as she gazed towards the depths of the forest.

Xu Fei also recognised this female disciple. She was an elite disciple of the same generation as him. While she wasn't a direct disciple of the clan, she was still rather valued by them, putting in quite a bit of effort in grooming her.

The girl was rather younger than Xu Fei, being around the same age as Yan Zhaoge.

The reason she had drawn Xu Fei's attention was that he knew that this junior apprentice-sister Wang had a rather close relationship with Lu Wen.

Perhaps Lu Wen still thought of her as just a junior apprentice-sister, but this junior apprentice-sister Wang rather admired Lu Wen.

And at this moment, where she was gazing was precisely where Lu Wen was in secluded cultivation.

Xu Fei knit his brows. If he was not wrong, Lu Wen had already been in seclusion for a rather long time.

“Junior apprentice-sister Wang, you are waiting for junior apprentice-brother Lu?” Xu Fei asked, and junior apprentice-sister Wang, recovering, hurriedly replied, “Senior apprentice-brother Xu, senior apprentice-brother Lu has been in seclusion for almost

two years!”

An unconcealable look of worry was visible within her eyes, as Xu Fei thought upon hearing her words, “After being defeated by junior apprentice-brother Yan, he has always been in seclusion, not having left at all...”

Xu Fei was not really familiar with Lu Wen, with the latter not liking his roughness and love of wine, and the two also not possessing any common topics, therefore not having much to do with each other.

Xu Fei also knew of Lu Wen’s great pride, but hearing of Lu Wen’s situation now, Xu Fei also felt a little worried for him.

Especially with the matter of the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss having emerged in recent years.

While Xu Fei felt a little worried, he didn’t show it on the surface, instead comforting junior apprentice-sister Wang, “Be at ease; perhaps junior apprentice-brother Lu, not shining for three years, will suddenly shock everyone upon his emergence.”

After comforting and persuading junior apprentice-sister Wang to return, Xu Fei, however, didn’t leave, instead sucking in a deep breath, walking deeper into the forest.

A sealed stone chamber built with the mountain as a foundation appeared before Xu Fei’s eyes.

HSSB 272: The Voice Beside His Ears

Looking at the tightly shut stone door, Xu Fei fell into deep thought.

Generally speaking, when martial practitioners entered secluded cultivation, others were strictly forbidden from disturbing them, intruding into their seclusion grounds. In some situations, a death enmity could even be established.

Within the same clan, when a martial practitioner was in secluded cultivation, even if it was the clan's seniors, they would generally only enter having been given prior permission.

Otherwise, except for the most serious of situations, one would not lightly intrude into the seclusion grounds of others.

This was not just a matter of manners. When martial practitioners were cultivating, sometimes, a tiny bit of disturbance could cause all their earlier work to be for naught, even being heavily injured as a result.

Suddenly being disturbed by others in the most critical moment of their cultivation, the results would be disastrous beyond imagination.

This was why in entering secluded cultivation for a long time, most people would invite others to stand guard for them, or establish a powerful formation to guard over them.

As a direct disciple of Broad Creed Mountain, while Lu Wen's seclusion ground had no guards, the clan had long since set up a guardian formation here.

The stone chamber that Lu Wen was in now was not Lu Wen's original dwelling, but one of many seclusion grounds that Broad Creed Mountain had specially prepared for its top disciples.

In entering secluded cultivation before, Xu Fei had also done so in a similar place.

However, looking at the stone chamber in which Lu Wen was currently located, Xu Fei just had some sort of an uneasy feeling.

After relinquishing the position of Suzhou City's Acting Elder and returning to the clan, he had received a new assignment, not at the Disciplinary Hall that his Master Shi Tie controlled, but at the Martial Inheritance Hall that Yan Di had been at.

Xu Fei was currently a subordinate of the Martial Inheritance Hall, its youngest Principal Elder.

Allocating and managing the stone chambers of seclusion of the clan's disciples was a responsibility of the Martial Inheritance Hall.

Xu Fei had the ability to open Lu Wen's stone chamber on his own, with this solely being out of consideration for the latter's safety.

Once, there had been a martial practitioner who had undergone cultivation deviation in the midst of secluded cultivation, suffering a heavy backlash and dying from grave injuries within the enclosed chamber, not discovered till a long time after.

Therefore, in order to prevent similar such situations from occurring, the Martial Inheritance Hall had specifically made some arrangements.

However, this was only in the rarest of situations. If it wasn't necessary, Elders of the Martial Inheritance Hall would not intrude into where others were undergoing secluded cultivation.

After considering for a moment, while he still felt it to be a little inappropriate, Xu Fei still reached out and pressed his hand on the door of the stone chamber.

After a while, the great stone door swung open, and Xu Fei entered carefully within.

Passing through the corridor, Xu Fei came to the innermost part of the chamber, seeing a man currently seated there in the meditative position.

This man's beard was filled with stubble, his face having been enveloped by his long hair, resembling a barbarian.

Whoever looked at him, on first glance, they would also be

unable to easily link it to the graceful Lu Wen of the past.

However, Xu Fei still recognised Lu Wen instantly. Still, what caused him to take more note was the fact that Lu Wen's body was currently clearly trembling as it seemed like he was shivering.

Xu Fei was unable to feel Lu Wen circulating his qi at this moment. The trembling of his body seemed not to be from cultivating, but from intense emotions.

“Something's wrong!” Xu Fei's heart sunk abruptly as he hurriedly neared Lu Wen.

Xu Fei did not conceal his approach, but Lu Wen seemed not to see him, just sitting there, his body trembling uncontrollably.

Carefully observing his face, Xu Fei was shocked to discover that Lu Wen's eyes were currently shut tight, his face pale and full of sweat, as though he was suffering from a great sickness.

Xu Fei called out in a low tone, “Junior apprentice-brother Lu!”

Lu Wen seemed to abruptly awaken as he finally opened his eyes, but as he looked ahead of him, his eyes appeared unfocused.

Carefully observing his pupils, Xu Fei clearly saw a faint bloodred light flickering within.

Accompanied by Lu Wen opening his eyes, from him emanated a faint air from which Xu Fei could truly feel resentment and unwillingness.

It was clearly the emotions of a human, yet gave off a tangible feeling at this moment.

Xu Fei's expression turned grave.

Through the interrogation of those who had been bewitched by the Decimating Abyss and plagued by devilish intent, Broad Creed Mountain and Xu Fei by extension now had a general understanding of some things.

Falling to the dark side occurred in phases.

Evil intent, stubborn intent, venomous intent, longing intent—these were possessed by most people, or it could even be said by everyone. It was just that most people could control those, rather than letting these negative thoughts take control of themselves.

However, when any one of these intents were stimulated by the Nine Underworlds, breaking past a certain threshold, they would transform into devilish intent.

The devilish intent would grow stronger and stronger, accumulating as it was hard to turn back, finally resonating with the devilish qi of the outside world, turning from illusory inside to real outside as one truly fell to the dark side.

The characteristics of fallen practitioners were very obvious. Their eyes became yellowed, radiating an evident bloodred light.

However, before truly falling to the dark side, those who bore devilish intent would appear no different from ordinary people on the outside.

There was only one exception. It was when one's intents broke past the threshold, transforming into devilish intent. At that moment, some characteristics could also be visibly seen.

These characteristics, were like how Lu Wen was at this moment!

At this moment, Lu Wen was shockingly at the point where the stubbornness within his heart was on the verge of transforming into devilish intent!

Although Xu Fei was right before him, Lu Wen's eyes were unfocused, as though he couldn't see Xu Fei at all.

He muttered indistinctly in a low voice, "Yan...Zhao...ge! Yan...Zhao...ge! Yan...Zhao...ge..."

Seeing this, Xu Fei sighed inwardly, but did not dare to hesitate at all as he extended his hands, forcefully slamming them on Lu Wen's shoulders!

“Junior apprentice-brother Lu!”

Lu Wen didn't react, as though bewitched by the devil.

Xu Fei asked in a deep tone, “Junior apprentice-brother Lu, do you cultivate just to be more powerful than junior apprentice-brother Yan?”

Hearing these words, Lu Wen's entire body shuddered intensely as he ceased his mutterings, but his eyes still remained lifeless.

Xu Fei asked, “In having entered the clan and painstakingly cultivated for so many years, what exactly was it for? For what was it that you picked up martial arts in the first place?”

Lu Wen's expression changed.

His face revealed a painful struggle at times and a crazed resolve at others, the two flickering intermittently.

Xu Fei lightened his tone, “Junior apprentice-brother Lu, think about it carefully. What exactly do you want; what exactly was it for that you have reached where you are today?”

Lu Wen's body gradually ceased to tremble, the bloodred light within his eyes also gradually fading.

On seeing this, Xu Fei finally let out a breath of relief.

After a while, Lu Wen's eyes finally regained their focus, as he said hoarsely while looking at Xu Fei, "Senior apprentice-brother Xu..."

Xu Fei said, "Stabilise your heart."

Lu Wen nodded slowly, closing his eyes once more. His face was full of weakness, pale as paper, beads of sweat trickling down like rain, but his body was no longer trembling, his expression also having turned calm.

Xu Fei looked at him, "Junior apprentice-brother Lu, I know that you have only just stabilised your emotions, and may not be willing to think back on some things, but this matter concerns the foundation of our clan, and cannot be delayed. There are some things that I have to get to the bottom of as soon as possible."

"Earlier, was it that someone came into contact with you, stimulating the stubbornness within your heart, causing it to become heavier and heavier, even to the point of connecting with the Nine Underworlds?"

Opening his eyes, Lu Wen slowly nodded, "Someone indeed spoke softly by my ear. Accompanied by his voice, there seemed to be a voice reverberating unceasingly within my heart, growing stronger and stronger, till it completely consumed my entire mind."

HSSB 273: The Devil Saint Attacks!

Hearing Lu Wen's answer, Xu Fei sucked in a deep breath, "Who was that person?"

He felt unease within his heart.

Lu Wen, however, shook his head, "I do not know who that person was. His voice seemed to have been disguised, and I was unable to distinguish it. However, his cultivation base was definitely very high."

Hearing Lu Wen's reply, Xu Fei's heart could not relax.

While Lu Wen had not revealed a shocking name, someone who was able to freely enter and exit Lu Wen's seclusion grounds must be quite an important person.

His Master, Fang Zhun, could enter and exit this place freely, but if nothing special occurred, Fang Zhun would generally not do so.

Other than Fang Zhun, other Essence Talisman Martial Grandmaster experts were also able to conceal their presence and enter this place without leaving behind any traces at all.

Even in Sacred Grounds like Broad Creed Mountain, Essence Talisman Martial Grandmasters were also limited existences, all of them bigwigs of the clan.

The final possibility was comparatively better, being that a Principal Elder of Broad Creed Mountain's Martial Inheritance Hall like Xu Fei had been the actual culprit.

But even if that had been the case, it also didn't make for much optimism.

Xu Fei asked heavily, "How long has it been since that person came to find you?"

Lu Wen silently calculated for a moment before answering, "It was about ten days ago."

Xu Fei nodded without any change in expression, his heart feeling heavy.

Ten days ago meant that this matter had just happened recently, a very long period of time already having passed since Elder Liu and the others had been captured. Naturally, it couldn't be those spies of the Decimating Abyss who had already been exposed.

This meant that operatives of the Decimating Abyss still existed within Broad Creed Mountain, also very possibly having a cultivation base and position that was not low.

After Lu Wen had moderated his condition for a bit, Xu Fei said, "Junior apprentice-brother Lu, if your condition is fine now, let us go together to see the elders of the clan."

While Lu Wen was still not in the best condition mentally, he still stood up, “Okay.”

The first person the two saw was Xu Fei’s Master, Shi Tie.

Shi Tie’s expression remained calm, not changing in the least as he questioned the two carefully, after which he said ponderingly, “Let’s first go to see junior apprentice-brother Fang.”

They proceeded to the Assignment Hall, but were informed that Fang Zhun had departed not long ago.

Fang Zhun had also not returned to his dwelling.

They discovered to their shock that they were actually temporarily unable to find any trace of Fang Zhun.

While with Fang Zhun’s cultivation, if he wanted to conceal himself, only a limited few of the entire Broad Creed Mountain would be able to discover him, if there was no special reason for it, Fang Zhun obviously wouldn’t do this.

This happening at this sensitive, volatile period, people would naturally link some matters together.

Xu Fei and Lu Wen exchanged looks, Lu Wen’s face which had originally seemed devoid of blood was tragically pale at this moment.

Only Shi Tie remained composed as always as he said calmly, “This matter is out of the ordinary, but before understanding the situation, do not overthink things.”

“Look for him first, but do not spread the matter. Only notify junior apprentice-brother Yan, senior apprentice-aunt He and the others, just informing them about this matter.”

After saying this, Shi Tie’s gaze swept across Xu Fei and Lu Wen, finally coming to rest on the latter, “I, personally, am willing to believe in junior apprentice-brother Fang.”

Xu Fei and Lu Wen both nodded in agreement, but unconcealable worry could still be seen within their gazes.

If Fang Zhun was not of the Decimating Abyss, with him disappearing now, the current situation should be greatly dangerous. It was possible that he had noticed something cropping up, currently being entangled in that situation, unable to extricate himself.

...but there was also the possibility of him having met danger, despite his great strength.

If even Fang Zhun was unable to deal with it, the viciousness and fearsomeness of the other party’s attack this time could be imagined.

This was actually still thinking on the bright side.

As for the worse side of things, if Fang Zhun had joined the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss...

Xu Fei and Lu Wen were both silent, really a little afraid to think any further down this line.

Shi Tie said, "Whatever has happened with junior apprentice-brother Fang is something we currently still do not know. However, from the problem in junior apprentice-brother Yan's family, your, Lu Wen's encounter, as well as his abnormal disappearance, it is for certain that the other side is already raring to make their move, having accumulated their strength and being about to exert it."

"Do not spread the matter of looking for junior apprentice-brother Fang. However, our clan must increase our vigilance for dealing with outside enemies as well as the spies that might exist internally a step further, being fully prepared for any occurrences. The enemy is right about to move."

On their way to find Shi Tie, Lu Wen had already heard Xu Fei's narration of the major incidents related to the Decimating Abyss that had occurred in the outside world while he had been in seclusion.

Now, he and Xu Fei both answered solemnly, "Yes, this disciple understands; we will inform the others now."

Raising his head to look at the dense sky of dark clouds, Xu Fei's gaze hardened, "It looks like this time's storm will truly not be small."

.....

At this moment, in the Central Heaven Region's Yunzhen County, at the Yan Family ancestral mansion, standing within a courtyard, Yan Zhaoge was similarly looking upwards at the sky.

Here, the sky was clear for thousands of kilometres all round, the sunlight bright and beautiful.

However, Yan Zhaoge didn't relax, still pondering non-stop, "If I were the other party, what would I do?"

"If Grand Master successfully achieves his breakthrough into the Martial Saint realm, it would be assurance as well as hope for our clan to progress further in the near future."

"However, from a certain perspective, it is also just that Grand Master is currently in his weakest state. If there are enemies cooperating from both the inside and the outside, he would be the most ideal target. Pulling out the firewood from beneath the furnace-such is the meaning."

"With father possessing control of the Clear Qi Robe and the Broad Creed Grand Formation, he is currently the most powerful person of our clan. However, with that in mind, if father is

defeated, our clan will immediately collapse.”

“Eldest apprentice-uncle and I both have devilish marks on us, having yet to completely disperse. If anything happens to the both of us, there would be the possibility of the Sand Region’s Great Nine Underworlds Door opening once more, and this is also a possibility that the clan cannot not guard against.”

“Eldest apprentice-uncle’s cultivation base is high, and with me having continuously wrecked the Decimating Abyss’s Devilish Domain Grand Formations and plans, this should also lead to their attention, marking me as an important target.”

Yan Zhaoge rubbed his temple, “The most important thing is whether or not there are people of the Decimating Abyss amongst our clan’s higher echelons. Otherwise, many plans will be unable to be executed, otherwise being leaked and counteracted, with the situation ending up even worse.”

“That’s why they say that guarding throughout the day and night, it is thieves within one’s own family that are hard to guard against ah...”

As Yan Zhaoge was pondering, Ah Hu rushed hurriedly over, “Young Master, the Principal Elder of Lianhu County has sent over an urgent message; someone has established a formation there, wanting to bring about the descent of the Nine Underworlds!”

“Cough, there is no need to guess whether there are spies this time; there definitely are, the problem just being who they are,”

Yan Zhaoge rolled his eyes.

Like Yunzhen County, Lianhu County was also in the Central Heaven Region, being an important land of Broad Creed Mountain.

With people having infiltrated into this place, establishing a formation as they attempted to open the Great Nine Underworlds Door, if there had not been anyone helping them internally, that would really be like meeting a ghost.

And the person helping them internally also had to be one whose position and status were not low.

After Yan Wenzhen and the others heard this news, their moods also turned heavy as Yan Zhaoge said, “It’s not that simple. Setting a bit of fire at our clan’s doorway, a random basin of water would be enough to extinguish it. Wanting the fire to truly blaze, other methods will definitely be waiting to obstruct us who would extinguish the fire.”

As he said this, immense pressure that caused Yan Zhaoge’s mind to numb and tremble suddenly arose from afar, instantly enveloping the surrounding heavens and earth all around!

“Hell!” Regaining his wits, Ah Hu directly cursed, “Martial Saint?!”

Yan Zhaoge let out a long breath, “He’s come indeed. Devil Saint, Yuan Tian.”

HSSB 274: A Battle At The Martial Saint Realm!

While Yan Zhaoge had always had a rather high opinion of himself, speaking from the bottom of his heart, even if there was someone specifically coming to deal with him, it truly didn't warrant a Martial Saint to personally make a move.

The appearance of the Devil Saint Yuan Tian was undoubtedly the Decimating Abyss putting external pressure on Broad Creed Mountain, drawing their attention and luring the tiger away from its mountain, buying opportunities for those in other places.

After all, no matter how high the level of a spy, the idea of helping Yuan Tian secretly infiltrate Broad Creed Mountain's core lands without anyone noticing was truly not putting Broad Creed Mountain in their eyes at all.

However, Broad Creed Mountain was helpless in that they could not ignore Yuan Tian's appearance.

Otherwise, if he began rampaging madly, the damage caused by him within a short period of time would not be much inferior to that by the Decimating Abyss.

If outsiders caused trouble like this on their territory and Broad Creed Mountain still remained firmly shut in, they would lose all face.

As for Yuan Tian taking care of Yan Zhaoge as he arrived at Yunzhen County, that was just an accompaniment to the grander plan.

In this, there was also possibly the intention of forcing Yan Di to emerge from Broad Creed Mountain along with the Clear Qi Robe.

While Yan Di and the others were not people who feared things, Yuan Zhengfeng was at a critical moment in his breakthrough, and these were volatile times. With internal and external problems surfacing simultaneously, there was the possibility that Broad Creed Mountain would suddenly act differently this time, and would choose to forcibly endure things before finding Yuan Tian for revenge afterwards.

Capturing Yan Zhaoge was but to add another chip to their hands to force Yan Di out of the Mountain.

With the arrival of Yuan Tian, Yan Zhaoge couldn't leave now even if he wanted to. Stabilising his heart, Yan Zhaoge just gazed into the distance.

Over the distant horizon, a grey fog surfaced, obscuring the sky and concealing the sun as it drifted over towards the Yan Family ancestral mansion.

The sky and sunlight which had originally been bright and beautiful completely disappeared at this moment, the world between the heavens and earth all grey.

Amidst the vast grey sea of clouds, countless figures vaguely surfaced, the clouds seemingly transforming into numerous pained, distorting faces, looking downwards together as they released simultaneous, soundless howls.

Yan Zhaoge, Ah Hu and the others all clearly felt a gloomy cold pervade them.

That cold did not infiltrate through the body's senses, but was rather a chill that arose from their very hearts, as though they were facing the greatest terror of their lives.

Gazing at those dark clouds, Yan Zhaoge secretly nodded, "There are indeed shadows of the Impermanent Devil Clan behind him. It is just that it is unknown whether he has begun to integrate the thoughts of Buddhism's impermanence within?"

As Yan Zhaoge knew, the Impermanent Devil Clan of before the Great Calamity had once experienced a massive change, with disputes having arisen on issues from the essence of the clan's martial arts to the legacies of the clan's experts.

Yan Zhaoge was not clear on the specifics, having only heard some general news on this.

However, along with the descent of the Great Calamity, it seemed like without having settled on this matter, the Impermanent Devil Clan had returned to the soil along with the heavens and the earth.

At this moment, looking at the dark clouds that enveloped the sky and covered the earth, Yan Zhaoge's mind involuntarily wavered slightly, many past memories surfacing within.

The dark clouds immediately enveloped the entire surrounding heavens and the earth, a great darkness concealing the sunlight, as Yunzhen County seemed to have descended into the darkness of night.

Having arrived here, Yuan Tian did not waste time on words, his powerful fist-intent suppressing the area, turning from illusory to real.

In front of Yuan Tian, the Yan Family Grand Formation seemed not to exist.

Numerous light dragons still soared and danced within the sky, but they seemed like illusory embellishments as they were completely unable to obstruct Yuan Tian.

Seemingly not needing to distinguish him at all, Yuan Tian's fist-intent directly zeroed in on Yan Zhaoge.

Against his will, Yan Zhaoge's body began rising on its own.

While all Ah Hu and the others within the Yan Family ancestral mansion could feel was numbness.

Soon after, they felt as though their internal organs were being

gripped in someone's hands, being squeezed tightly.

Popping sounds resounded from their entire body's bones, their bodies seemingly about to explode, blood vessels shattering as blood shot out from all the pores on their body!

Of everyone here, the one with the highest cultivation base, Yan Wenzhen, was but at the fourth level of the Martial Grandmaster realm, at the early Essence Spirit stage.

Not needing to himself appear, Yuan Tian could already sweep over the entire area, capturing Yan Zhaoge alive as he simultaneously decimated the Yan Family ancestral mansion.

However, as the target of Yuan Tian, directly facing his strength, Yan Zhaoge remained composed as there were no changes in his expression whatsoever, with him instead viewing and analysing Yuan Tian's fist-intent somewhat interestedly.

Yuan Tian might have noticed this abnormality in Yan Zhaoge, but he didn't ask anything of it, instead continuing to move according to his pace.

As one of the current six great Martial Saints of this world, he fully possessed the ability to do so.

Sadly for him, his thoughts were destined to be unable to reach fruition.

The world suddenly shuddered as countless streams of clear qi surged into existence, instantly sweeping through the all-encompassing dark clouds within the sky, sunlight emerging as it penetrated through the cloud layer once more, illuminating the great earth.

A domineering sabre-intent cut through the horizon, shattering Yuan Tian's fist-intent that was exerting force on the Yan Family ancestral mansion.

Just having hovered up a few metres, Yan Zhaoge landed within the ancestral mansion once more.

Ah Hu, Yan Wenzhen and the others all simultaneously let out relieved breaths, no longer pressured to the point that it seemed like their bodies would literally explode.

The dark clouds roiled within the air, dispersing to the sides, revealing a single person. It was a pale-faced middle-aged man with the appearance of a scholar.

It was the Devil Saint Yuan Tian, famed within the entire Eight Extremities World!

Yuan Tian frowned slightly, "Clear Qi Robe, Yan Di?"

As the winds and clouds between the heavens and the earth surged vigorously, a handsome man who looked not yet thirty, yet with a bit of whiteness already at his brows, appeared. It was

precisely Yan Zhaoge's father who was currently serving as Broad Creed Mountain's Chief, Yan Di.

Seeing Yan Di appear, Yan Wenzhen and the rest all let out relieved breaths once more.

Yuan Tian focused his gaze on Yan Di, or rather the white robe that Yan Di was currently in.

A broad white robe covered Yan Di's body, seemingly distorting the surrounding space around him, containing infinite profundities that transformed the space of the very heavens and earth into clothes.

Countless streams of clear qi emanated from the white robe in all directions, seemingly drawing the surrounding world within.

"Clear Qi Robe," Yuan Tian nodded as he then looked at Yan Di, "Why are you here? Actually taking the Clear Qi Robe and leaving Broad Creed Mountain on your own initiative-could it be that you were specifically coming for this Yuan? How could you be sure that this Yuan would definitely appear here?"

His hands behind his back, looking calmly at the Martial Saint Yuan Tian, rather than replying, Yan Di instead asked, "Yuan Tian, with your strength and status, why are you willing to work for the Nine Underworlds? What can they give you? Could it be that you also want to give up on being human in exchange for eternal life?"

Yuan Tian shook his head, “It’s also fine. Anyway, I originally came here to force you to leave Broad Creed Mountain. You being willing to come out on your own initiative fits my intentions perfectly.

“I can generally also guess some of your thoughts; trying to take the initiative into your hands, taking me by surprise before saving your son and immediately rushing back to the mountain. That way, it would instead be our people who definitely wouldn’t be able to react in time, making their move over at Broad Creed Mountain.”

Below, the corners of Yan Zhaoge’s lips curled up slightly.

His father and Yuan Tian both didn’t have any intention of answering each other’s questions. While their tones were mild, they were continually standing off mightily against each other.

The concepts of the two great experts had begun clashing intensely ever since they had met, pushing against each other, causing the surrounding heavens and earth to tremble.

Looking at Yan Di, Yuan Tian said indifferently, “But, bringing your son away before me-would it really be that easy?”

Saying thus, he raised his hand, clenching it into a fist.

A terrifying force instantly agglomerated.

He punched out, striking with a momentum that shocked the heavens!

HSSB 275: Without Much Of A Difference In Cultivation Level, I Am The Superior!

As Yuan Tian punched out, the dark clouds surged between the heavens and earth, creating a giant vortex that lunged towards Yan Di.

That vortex seemed to contain innumerable faces, howling together in agonised pain.

The vortex formed of the dark clouds resembled hell on earth, sucking all surrounding life within.

Yan Di raised his brows slightly, spreading apart his arms with the Clear Qi Robe on him as countless streams of clear qi surged, majestic as the heavens.

That tangible fist-intent of Yuan Tian's was blocked by Yan Di, instantly unable to proceed any further.

A feeling seemed to well up within his heart that even though it was clearly that he was a Martial Saint while Yan Di was still a Martial Grandmaster, Yan Di seemed to preside high above him, resembling the broad heavens, looking down upon him.

Yuan Tian knit his brows slightly, the fingers of his clenched fist suddenly unfurling.

He switched his fist to a claw, ripping mightily.

Dense grey clouds, transforming into a terrifying claw that resembled that of a devil king, seemed about to rip apart the very sky at this moment!

Impermanent Devil Claw!

Some radiance now surfaced on the white robe on Yan Di.

The radiance was beaded, resembling corn.

Its lustre was half black, half yellow, not bright, whilst also not dim; it contained a heaviness that seemed hard to withstand amidst a concept that was vast as the heavens.

The aura of Yan Di's Clear Qi Robe skyrocketed ceaselessly, seemingly without limit.

Facing Yuan Tian's Impermanent Devil Claw, he struck out with his palm as light emanated from within, clear and bright, resembling glazed Vajra!

While Yan Di's attainment in the Vajra Body was inferior to Shi Tie's, currently striking out with the Clear Qi Robe on him, it was as though a Martial Saint was executing the Vajra Body!

The terrifying, condensed palm that resembled Vajra clashed

with the Impermanent Devil Claw head-on, not giving Yuan Tian any room in the slightest.

As palm and claw met, a cold light abruptly shot out from Yuan Tian's eyes.

From that clear, transparent strike of Yan Di's purplish-red flames suddenly blazed, erupting from his palm!

Terrifying Tushita flames that seemed like they could refine all objects and incinerate all objects surged from Yan Di's palm, with the birth of an unimaginably powerful eruptive force.

What caused even Yuan Tian to take notice was that in this single move of Yan Di's, he had actually simultaneously executed two great martial arts of Broad Creed Mountain, the Vajra Body and the Tushita palm, with such skill that it was hard to differentiate between the two moves.

As the purple Tushita flames blazed, the eternal, firm concept of the Vajra body was not affected in the least, remaining undamaged and inextinguishable.

Meanwhile, the concept of the Vajra Body also did not obstruct or seal the strength of the Tushita Palm in the slightest.

The two supreme martial arts coordinated and complemented each other perfectly, together unleashing a shocking power.

That terrifying Impermanent Devil Claw that obscured the heavens and concealed the sun and seemed like it could even pluck the stars and capture the moon actually trembled.

Wisps of grey fog continuously dispersed from the massive claw, the devilish claw seemingly about to collapse and dissipate.

Yuan Tian nodded calmly, “Hailed as number one amongst your generation, you are indeed worthy of your name.”

He made to change his claw, but found that it was sucked in place by Yan Di’s palm, actually unable to easily move.

Looking over, on Yan Di’s palm, as radiance surged, numerous streams of faint golden light appeared, resembling countless golden ropes.

The countless golden ropes entangled the Impermanent Devil Claw, causing it to be unable to easily change its form, whilst also hard pressed to break free, only able to meet the mighty combined attack of the Vajra Body and the Tushita Palm head-on!

Other than the Vajra Body and the Tushita Palm, this move of Yan Di’s clearly also had another of Broad Creed Mountain’s Eight Extreme Arts integrated within.

The Golden Curtain Palm!

With the three supreme martial arts integrated and merged

together, Yan Di's palm erupted mightily with power, violent purple Tushita flames exploding, instantly turning the massive heaven-obscuring palm formed of dark clouds into a sea of flames!

Yuan Tian looked coldly at this scene, "Clear Qi Robe, Sacred Artifact-it is indeed a good thing."

Seeing his Impermanent Devil Claw being broken, no changes could be seen in Yuan Tian's expression whatsoever.

"A pity, but at the end of the day, you are just not a Martial Saint."

Saying this, Yuan Tian's outstretched palm suddenly clenched.

Those dark clouds that had been incinerated and extinguished by the purple Tushita flames suddenly appeared once more, drifting about, boundless and without end.

It seemed like everything earlier had been but an illusion.

The fierce Tushita flames surged once more, incinerating the dark clouds, but the sea of dark clouds still remained.

They were clearly boundless, majestic dark clouds that encompassed the entire sky, obscuring the heavens and concealing the sun, but they currently seemed in a realm unable to touch, unable to get close to.

However fierce and violent the purple Tushita flames, however the palm strength of the Golden Curtain Palm trapped the clouds, wind, sun and moon, however fearless and unyielding the Vajra Body.

The dark clouds remained, never dissipating, never extinguished, their gathering and dispersing impermanent.

On the ground, witnessing this scene, Yan Zhaoge raised his head slightly, “There’re already some traces of the impermanence of Buddhism.”

The Yan Di who was currently facing Yuan Tian head-on could see even more.

Within the depths of the dark clouds, there seemed to be a wheel, spinning unceasingly.

Every time Yan Di’s attack landed on the dark clouds, the spinning of that wheel became more rapid.

That was where the true core of Yuan Tian’s fist-intent lay, causing boundless dark clouds to surge, gradually moving to surround Yan Di!

“With the Clear Qi Robe on me, I am also not much different from a Martial Saint...” Yan Di said mildly, his palm suddenly shedding the image of Vajra, the forces of the Golden Curtain Palm

and the Tushita Palm also disappearing.

He raised his hand high into the air, fingers forming a sabre, “And without too much of a difference between our cultivation levels...”

Saying thus, Yan Di’s raised right hand chopped downwards!

An imposing sabre-intent swept the area.

Between the heavens and the earth, the world seemed to suddenly split apart.

A massive crack appeared within the sky, completely pitch black within.

Space was truly ripped apart at this very moment!

Yan Di’s sabre descended, an incalculable, immeasurable limitless force added on the blade of the sabre.

Currently, Yuan Tian could only feel like the infinite, boundless sky above his head had suddenly transformed into the blade of Yan Di’s sabre, chopping down towards him!

Of Broad Creed Mountain three Supreme Arts, the Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre!

The supreme sabre art that had been passed down from the Exalted Heaven Shaker Zhan Dongge, invincible throughout the entire Eight Extremities World that year, contained infinite, boundless power, a sabre of the great sky!

At this moment, bolstered by the Clear Qi Robe, the momentum of Yan Di's sabre far, far surpassed back during the war of the Eastern Tang against the Sacred Sun Clan!

In times long past, when it had still yet to develop, Yuan Tian had once personally witnessed the Exalted Heaven Shaker Zhan Dongge, wielding his sabre.

Currently, facing Yan Di, he could only vaguely feel as though that existence, invincible throughout the Eight Extremities World that year, had actually appeared within this world once more!

The dark clouds were sliced apart, that wheel in their midst also hacked in two by that sabre!

As the sabre-intent that cut through the heavens surged, Yan Di said calmly, "...without much of a difference in cultivation level, I am the superior."

Utter silence reigned between the heavens and the earth, seemingly also shocked by Yan Di's declaration of surefire victory as a Martial Grandmaster against a Martial Saint.

Looking at Yan Di, Yuan Tian snorted, "Yan Di...Yan Wudi...huh,

what a great Yan Wudi!”

His two hands separated horizontally to the sides, than slowly closed together once more.

Gales arose and clouds surged between the heavens and the earth, a boundless grey sea of clouds obscuring the sky once more.

“I admit that with the Clear Qi Robe, you are a worthy opponent, like Huang Guanglie and those few others,” Yuan Tian was expressionless, possessing an extremely firm will having been able to reach where he was today, “However, who is the superior is not something that can be determined by words. One or two moves also cannot say for much-a conclusion can only been reached when one side is completely dead and gone.”

Yuan Tian said coldly, “But I don’t know; with the two of us clashing at this place, how will Broad Creed Mountain survive its tribulation?”

“Whatever reason it was for, with your and the Clear Qi Robe having left the Mountain, you are both alone and without reinforcement. Even if Huang Guanglie has not emerged from seclusion, as long as the Sacred Sun Clan has the Great Sun Heaven Measuring Ruler, they will definitely come.”

HSSB 276: All Preparations Set

Faced with the grey clouds that obscured the heavens and concealed the sun once more, Yan Di's expression didn't change as he chopped out with a sabre!

The majestic, infinite, boundless sabre-intent forcibly chopped through the grey clouds.

Against Yan Di's Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre, those ethereal, drifting dark clouds were also unable to maintain their unpredictable and mysterious state.

It was as though they had been returned to the mortal world by Yan Di's sabre, to a level that could be touched by mortals once more.

Faced with that terrifying and domineering attack Yuan Tian snorted coldly, waving his hands as a long grey whip appeared in his grasp.

The long whip merged with the dark clouds, unpredictable in its variations.

From that long grey whip, powerful spiritual qi fluctuations and concept could be felt. It was a high-grade spirit artifact.

While the whip was not a Sacred Artifact, with it on hand, Yuan Tian's aura was naturally different. His true martial intent merged

with the spirituality of his spirit artifact, each complementing and boosting the other as a shocking power was instantly unleashed.

Yan Di let out a clear roar, his palm performing a motion like the drawing of a sabre within the air.

A purple sabre instantly landed within his palm. Flipping his wrist, he chopped out with the sabre.

The power of the Sacred Artifact, the Clear Qi Robe, not just bolstered Yan Di, also simultaneously merging with the high-grade spirit artifact, the Heavenly Dragon Sabre, in Yan Di's hands.

Under Yan Di's sabre, the dark clouds dispersed in retreat, the long whip in Yuan Tian's hands even letting out an agonised cry as though possessing life.

Yuan Tian's had no changes in his expression whatsoever as no humiliated feelings were visible. The long whip in his hands expanded, seemingly coiling like a long dragon of ten thousand li within the vast sky.

The dark clouds completely transformed into a sea of clouds, enveloping the surrounding ten thousand li all around, obscuring Yuan Tian's figure.

There was only that long black whip which traversed the layer of clouds, resembling an evil dragon seeking out its head as it peered at Yan Di down below.

Countless jet-black thunderbolts descended from the heavens, dense as rain.

A massive vortex was formed at the centre of the dark clouds once more, encompassing a vast area as it seemed to block up the entire horizon.

On the great earth below, standing within the Yan Family ancestral mansion, as Yan Zhaoge and the others raised their heads, they saw that above their heads, till the distant horizon, the sky seemed to be completely enveloped by a vortex of dark clouds.

Raising their heads and gazing upwards, it was like the entire sky was rotating ceaselessly.

The great earth quaked, all objects, all things, along with shattered mud and rocks, beginning to hover and drift into the air, as though about to be sucked in and consumed by the vortex in the heavens.

Gazing over, the entire Yunzhen County seemed about to be flipped over by Yuan Tian.

There was only where Yan Di currently stood as well the Yan Family ancestral mansion beneath him that still remained safe and without incident.

Yan Di naturally wouldn't sit by and allow Yuan Tian to act so

rampantly and destructively in the lands of the Central Heaven Region. In Yunzhen County, other than the Yan Family, there also resided countless living beings.

His right hand wielding the Heavenly Dragon Sabre, he flipped his left palm, slamming towards the ground down below.

The glazed light of Vajra appeared on Yan Di's left hand once more.

A powerful, unshaking will merged with the Clear Qi Robe, specks of black and yellow radiance, dense and heavy, suppressing towards the great earth down below.

Countless streams of clear qi spread outwards into the surroundings, seeming inconspicuous as air, yet instantly stabilising the surrounding heavens and earth.

At the same time, Yan Di chopped out with his sabre, the majestic sabre-light reaping the heavens and shattering the earth as it soared straight up into the clouds above!

With his Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre, Yan Di hacked at the massive vortex within the air.

As the massive vortex rotated, the black dragon heaved, wanting to smash apart Yan Di's sabre-light.

However, that infinite, boundless sabre-light seemed to draw in

the grand, boundless force of the surrounding heavens and earth in bolstering it remained standing unyieldingly.

Flickering, the sabre-light did not shatter, as it was instead that vortex formed of dark clouds that began to shake unceasingly, seemingly gradually nearing the brink of collapse.

Having met a setback, Yuan Tian's will did not shake in the slightest, still mightily fighting it out with Yan Di.

He did not forcibly clash with Yan Di's Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre head-on, instead calming his heart, entangling with Yan Di using a harassing, time-wasting method.

An exalted Martial Saint expert actually choosing to employ such a method against Yan Di and the Clear Qi robe, one would inevitably feel some disappointment and disillusionment.

However, Yuan Tian did not mind this. While his devilish martial arts were also strange and domineering, as compared to the Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre, they were less suited to head-on clashes.

Faced with the domineering, rampaging might of Yan Di's Immeasurable Heavenly Sabres, continuously meeting them head-on would be a rather unwise decision for Yuan Tian.

Moreover, while it was true that Yan Di's strength had skyrocketed with the assistance of the Clear Qi Robe, at the end of

the day, Yan Di was not a true Martial Saint. Wielding a Sacred Artifact, he was also expending quite a bit of strength.

As compared to this, the most important thing was that the longer Yan Di and the Clear Qi Robe were away from Broad Creed Mountain, the more dangerous it was for Broad Creed Mountain itself!

To Yuan Tian, he just had to delay Yan Di here for an extended period of time. As long as he could do this, it was already a victory for him.

Within the dark clouds, Yuan Tian's gaze was as cold as ice as he looked calmly at Yan Di, no humiliated rage or frustration visible on his face whatsoever.

It was just that Yuan Tian was also feeling wary at Yan Di, similarly having the appearance of being as stable as Mount Tai, not hurried or flustered in the least.

Yan Di was indeed not in a rush, asking quietly as he wielded his sabre, hacking the vortex of dark clouds overhead to the brink of complete collapse, "Zhaoge, how go your preparations?"

In the Yan Family ancestral mansion beneath, standing within the ancestral temple at the back, Yan Zhaoge was circulating the Yan Family Grand Formation at its maximum.

He was currently standing by the core of the formation, a stone

pillar erect beside him, precisely the pillar of the Divine Palace.

If the pillar retained its original size, it would break through the roof of the Yan Family ancestral temple. Therefore, Yan Zhaoge controlled its size to around three metres, letting it stand within the ancestral temple.

“All preparations set,” Yan Zhaoge smiled.

Yuan Tian frowned. He had already personally experienced the power of the Yan Family Grand Formation just now.

Let alone an exalted Martial Saint like himself, most Essence Talisman Martial Grandmasters would also be able to treat the formation like it was nothing.

However much of a heaven-defying genius Yan Zhaoge was, the current gap between them was also far too wide.

If one were to argue that this formation might be able to provide Yan Di some help, that was also impossible. Faced with the current battle situation, it would be utterly inadequate.

This current battle of the Martial Saint realm was completely not something that Yan Zhaoge and the other members of the Yan Family could partake in. If not for Yan Di's protection, the mere aftershocks of the battle would be sufficient to devastate the entire Yunzhen County, causing heaven-shaking, earth-overturning chaos in the surrounding area far and wide.

However, Yuan Tian's acute senses that had been developed over many years told him that, there truly was danger!

As the thought spun a few times at lightning speed within his mind, Yuan Tian suddenly retreated!

However, at this moment, Yan Di chopped out with his sabre, the majestic sabre-light changing from incomparably tough to soft and supple. The Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre did not only consist of fierceness.

The supple sabre-light resembled a long, meandering river as it sucked the dark clouds within the sky in place, causing Yuan Tian to be unable to immediately retreat.

At this, Yuan Tian now knew for sure that something was up, and became even more determined to first retreat before making further plans.

However, in the Yan Family ancestral temple below, after bowing to the tablets of his ancestors, Yan Zhaoge moved in a circle around the pillar of the Divine Palace, punching out at it every step he took.

Nine consecutive steps, nine consecutive fists. Yan Zhaoge's fist-intent stimulated the pillar of the Divine Palace, causing it to light up with a dazzling radiance.

Yan Zhaoge's forehead lit up with a rune.

The Yan Family Grand Formation glowed with an unprecedented brightness.

On the forehead of Yan Di, still clashing with Yuan Tian in mid-air, a rune also shone.

A thick rune lit up on the great earth, rapidly extending to the northeast, the space illuminated by the light seemingly turning blurry and indistinct.

The suction force of Yan Di's sabre-light still locking down Yuan Tian, the figures of the two gradually turned blurry within the air.

HSSB 277: Sending The Lord Into His Coffin

Letting out a low howl of rage, Yuan Tian felt a rare emotion—threatened.

However, the figures of Yan Di and himself blurred in the sky, then disappeared.

Likewise, the clouds which had just recently enveloped the world also disappeared without a trace.

The clear sunlight once again shone down on the people below.

Watching Yan Di and Yuan Tian disappear, Yan Zhaoge let out a sigh of relief: “That wasn’t easy, but we succeeded.”

Ah Hu and Yan Wenzhen were at a loss as they stared at Yan Zhaoge. Someone asked, “Zhaoge, what happened to the Family Head and the Devil Saint?”

Yan Zhaoge looked towards the northeast. “They’ve been transported to Broad Creed Mountain.”

Ah Hu and the others looked at each other.

Yan Wenzhen and some of the others couldn’t exactly understand what Yan Zhaoge had said as they pondered the wording.

Ah Hu decided to ask directly: “Young Master, weren’t we supposed to prevent enemies from getting close to the clan? Especially apex experts like the Devil Saint; this kind of enemy could wreak havoc if they made it to the core grounds of our clan. Isn’t this just inviting disaster? When the time comes, if our enemies coordinate an attack....”

Yan Zhaoge spoke out. “You can rest assured, even though they were sent to Broad Creed Mountain together, father has naturally changed Broad Creed Mountain’s defensive formation.”

“Using the power of the formation, we have constructed a foreign dimension. Father and the Devil Saint have been sent there.”

“In there, father can borrow the power of the guardian grand formation. With it, he should have the upper hand over Yuan Tian when they fight. At the same time, he is close to the clan and can watch over it.”

Yan Zhaoge continued, “Even though the other experts in the clan cannot directly help since they have to protect against other enemies, as long as father has the Clear Qi Robe and the power of the grand formation, there’s a chance that Yuan Tian won’t be able to leave alive.”

“Compared to our other enemies, Yuan Tian is always the most direct threat. If we can rid ourselves of this headache, then we’ll save ourselves a lot of effort in the future.”

If a martial practitioner decided to go on rampage and there was

no one present that could match his power, then he would be an unstoppable destructive force.

Ah Hu and all the others were looking towards the center of the ancestral mansion at the pillar of the Divine Palace.

Yan Zhaoge rubbed his temples. This plan had been known only to himself and Yan Di.

On the side of Broad Creed Mountain, some of the higher echelon Elders only knew that Yan Di was adjusting the defensive formation to temporarily create a foreign space as a battlefield to prevent damage to the clan itself.

However, they did not know that this foreign space was meant to be a trap set for Yuan Tian or possibly Huang Guanglie.

After all, attempting to transfer such a powerful martial practitioner into the foreign space would be an extremely difficult task.

Even if both parties were peaceful, it would still be extremely difficult. This time, a huge number of conditions needed to be met for this attempt to succeed, and it would be practically impossible to replicate.

All of the planning and preparations had been made in advance, and were only known to the father son duo of Yan Di and Yan Zhaoge.

If even his father was part of the Decimating Abyss Organization, then he could only accept his bad luck.

Yan Zhaoge thought about the present circumstances while also controlling the Divine Palace pillar.

Yan Zhaoge turned around to see Yan Wenzhen. “Third Granduncle, this time, the defensive array of the family ancestral mansion is almost entirely destroyed. To repair it, I’m afraid I’ll have to trouble you.”

“It’s not a problem. After all, it was unavoidable anyways.” Yan Wenzhen turned around. “If something happens to Broad Creed Mountain, the Yan Family would inevitably also be affected.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “There should be enough materials left in the family vault to replenish the formation. If there truly is a lack of materials, then we will have to substitute different materials for now.”

“I can lend a hand on relaying the formation for now. After the conflict has passed, the family head can return to further revise the formation.”

Without taking the rumors into account and just by seeing Yan Zhaoge in action, Yan Wenzhen and the others could determine that Yan Zhaoge’s attainments in formations far surpassed any cultivator of the same level and even surpassed everyone present.

Yan Wenzhen sent out the command for everyone to help Yan Zhaoge to quickly lay out the array.

Although the ancestral formation was weaker than it had been previously, at least it was circulating again and offered some amount of protection.

Yan Zhaoge spoke out. "I will rush to Lianhu County. Third Granduncle, stay here and be extra careful."

Bidding farewell to Yan Wenzhen and the others, Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu left the ancestral mansion. Rather than returning to the clan, they rushed towards Lianhu County.

"Young Master, since the Decimating Abyss wants to induce the descent of the Nine Underworlds in Lianhu County, an Elder from the clan will also rush over to help, right?"

Yan Zhaoge sat on Pan Pan's back as he looked into the distance. "Elder He and Elder Zhang, the Grand Elders, have to sit over the clan. One has to guard over the Chief's seclusion grounds while the other needs to serve as a backbone for the clan's administration."

"The First Seat Elder of the Heaven Sealing Gorge must be even more vigilant, and cannot leave the clan easily."

"Father is specifically dealing with the other's Martial Saints or Sacred Artifacts, so if they send an Elder to deal with the situation

in Lianhu County, it should either be eldest or second apprentice-uncle. The clan's Martial Grandmaster experts of the late Essence Talisman stage are just these few."

"If neither one of them can leave the clan, then senior apprentice-aunt Fu may come."

Ah Hu was silent for a moment as he scratched his head. "Young Master, are you forgetting someone? The Martial Repository's Xin Dongping is stronger than either Elder He or Elder Zhang. He is only inferior when compared to the Chief."

"Though it is difficult to say who is stronger between the Family Head and Elder Xin, he definitely places amongst the top three experts of all of Broad Creed Mountain."

Yan Zhaoge didn't say anything, but inclined his head slightly upwards. "At this moment we can be absolutely certain that amongst the clan's higher echelons, there is still another person belonging to the Decimating Abyss."

"Ah Hu, if you were to guess who is most likely to be the traitor, who would you guess? Only as a speculation."

Ah Hu opened and closed his mouth. "Eh... If I had to guess, I would say that both Elder Xin and Elder Fang are equally likely...."

Yan Zhaoge nodded. "That's right. In Chief succession, one of them lost to the Grand Master, while the other one lost to my

father.”

“Because of his loss that year, Elder Xin has a heart barrier which means that even now, he is unable to reach that highest peak and step into the realm of Martial Saints.”

“The other one was long heralded as the Hidden Dragon. Due to his loss, he may very well be hidden for an entire lifetime now.”

Yan Zhaoge gazed into the distance. “The human heart is inscrutable. We don’t know what they are thinking, but they definitely are not overjoyed about their own situations.”

Ah Hu grinned. “Young Master, you seem more wary about Elder Xin?”

Yan Zhaoge responded, “Even though second apprentice-uncle was directly competing against Father, maybe because I’m more familiar with him, I truly hope that he does not turn out to be traitorous.”

“Of course, I can’t deny that in the case that Elder Xin turns traitor, the damage to the clan may very well be heavier than it would be if it is was second apprentice-uncle.”

“Don’t look at how Elder Xin seems to be separate from worldly affairs. Actually, his impact on Broad Creed Mountain has never been insignificant. All this time, he has been unable to make that last step into the Martial Saint realm, but if he had succeeded it

would have been the Chief who was embarrassed.”

Ah Hu stated, “Because of this reason, you think that Elder Xin may have his stubbornness turn into devilish intent? On the other hand, as long as the Family Head does not fall into the same situation that the Chief has, the chance of Elder Fang assuming power is simply too low.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded. “Right, there is also this possibility.”

Ah Hu hesitated for a moment, then spoke. “Young Master, what then if both Elder Xin and Elder Fang...”

Yan Zhaoge narrowed his eyes. “In that case, it will truly be hard for our clan to survive this calamity.”

HSSB 278: Knowing Of The Tiger's Presence, Yet Still Heading Up The Mountain

Yan Zhaoge, along with Ah Hu and Pan-Pan, rushed over to Lianhu County.

There, they encountered Shi Tie and Xu Fei.

The matter of Lianhu County had finally been handed over to Shi Tie to deal with, and Yan Zhaoge also learnt of the news regarding Fang Zhun and Lu Wen.

Ah Hu's face was bitter as he looked at Yan Zhaoge, while Yan Zhaoge rubbed his temple, "Eldest apprentice-uncle, senior apprentice-brother Xu, what is the situation now with the other peak experts of the clan?"

Xu Fei answered, "Senior apprentice-uncle Yan is battling the Devil Saint in a foreign dimension, while Elder Zhang and Elder Xin are guarding our clan's grand formation, helping to support senior apprentice-brother Yan whilst also staying vigilant of other invading enemies. Elder He is guarding Grand Master, while senior apprentice-aunt Fu is searching for senior apprentice-uncle Fang."

Yan Zhaoge nodded soundlessly, the conversation proceeding amidst their hurrying.

Over on the territory of Lianhu County, there existed many lakes, individually dotting the area as they resembled tiny lake kingdoms

of their own.

Moving here, Yan Zhaoge had a feeling like he was back at the Lake Domain's Clear Concealed Lake.

Nearing the south of Lianhu County, that terrifying aura that shook one's heart, shocking one's very soul, appeared once more.

Gazing into the distance, dense black fog filled the entire sky. Amidst the black clouds, bloodred lightning flickered, as it was like a scene from the end of the world.

Below, the numerous lakes were jet-black as ink as a massive grand formation could vaguely be seen on the ground, its countless spirit patterns flickering with black streams of light.

Yan Zhaoge swivelled his head to look at Shi Tie, "Eldest apprentice-uncle, the other party's technique that changes the location of the descent of the Great Nine Underworlds Door is extremely intricate and profound, not being easy to break. It should not just be used just once; we must be prepared for the possibility of it being used once more."

Shi Tie said, "It is most likely like this."

They killed their way into the core region of the Devilish Domain Grand Formation. What was rather abnormal was that, along the way, they did not encounter the obstruction of many Decimating Abyss martial practitioners at all.

Yan Zhaoge's pupils dilated slightly, "They have definitely set up a trap. If the core of this Devilish Domain Grand Formation here is damaged, the location of the descent of the Great Nine Underworlds Door will change once more."

"Them not obstructing us at this moment is not that they don't care, but that they want to make use of the time when we are suppressing the Great Nine Underworlds Door to launch a sudden assault on us."

"At that time, if our attentions are on suppressing the Great Nine Underworlds Door, it will be greatly advantageous to them."

Hearing his words, Shi Tie and the others all frowned.

Yan Zhaoge let out a long breath, "As for us, it is impossible for us to stand by and watch the Nine Underworlds Door descend. However..."

Looking at the devilish mark on the back of his left hand, Yan Zhaoge narrowed his eyes into slits, "However, our understanding towards Devilish Domain Grand Formations has also improved greatly from the last two times."

They progressed forward, finally stepping into that crimson red devilish domain core region once more. Witnessing a tall golden tower standing tall before him once again, Yan Zhaoge remained expressionless as he showed no joy or sorrow on his face whatsoever.

The land here was completely bare, with only the mighty circulation of the Devilish Domain Grand Formation.

A red door of light at the top of the tall golden tower formed a projection on the ground, wanting to guide the Nine Underworlds to descend into this world.

Countless black spirit patterns, extending outwards in all directions, converged once more, resembling chains as they entangled the golden tower.

Not hesitating in the least, Yan Zhaoge flew forward, slamming out with his palms, continuously striking out at those black spirit patterns.

Assaulted by Yan Zhaoge, a tiny circular ring instantly surfaced on those spirit patterns.

Within the flickering white ring of light, a complicated, profound rune surfaced, engraving itself on the spirit patterns of the Devilish Domain Grand Formation like a sealing mark.

“While the pillar of the Divine Palace temporarily cannot be used...” Yan Zhaoge’s gaze was calm as he struck out continuously with his palm.

Finally coming to the foot of the tall golden tower, he struck out simultaneously with his palms, forming a massive rune that

engraved itself on the tower.

“Eldest apprentice-uncle!” Yan Zhaoge called.

Shi Tie had long since been prepared as he now came up in big strides, arriving at the top of the golden tower whereupon he struck out with a palm.

The golden tower shook mightily, the countless black spirit patterns entangling it beginning to surge in reverse.

The Devilish Domain Grand Formation gradually dispersed, with the devilish qi not flowing elsewhere like the Decimating Abyss martial practitioners wanted.

The aura of the Nine Underworlds here grew weaker and weaker, that tall golden tower clearly beginning to shrink in size at this moment.

It shrunk stably, rather than collapsing in an instant.

Seeing this, Xu Fei and Ah Hu both let out sighs of relief, the latter grinning, “Young Master, I guess that at this point, even the Decimating Abyss’s strongest expert in formations is not as familiar as you are with these Devilish Domain Grand Formations?”

Yan Zhaoge’s hands had currently already left the golden tower. With Shi Tie, a late Essence Talisman Martial Grandmaster

suppressing it, it was already sufficient.

Not having yet replied, a vigorous dark light suddenly appeared before their eyes, easily piercing through the boundless darkness, abruptly striking over!

The speed of that dark light was such that Yan Zhaoge, Xu Fei and Ah Hu were completely unable to react to it in time.

Resembling true black lightning, its power vigorous and condensed to the extreme, seemingly able to directly rip the great earth apart!

However, Shi Tie was able to detect the enemy's attack in time.

He transformed into Vajra, illuminating the entire world all around. Even within the devilish domain, he was like an ocean-stabilising pillar, standing firm as the devilish qi was unable to near him, most of the surrounding black fog being dispersed in an instant.

One of his hands still pressing down on the golden tower, Shi Tie's other hand punched out, directly meeting that terrifying dark light head-on.

Bright light lit up between the heavens and the earth, illuminating the dim world.

Shi Tie looked at the newcomer. It was an old enemy, the 'Scaly

Dragon King' Sima Chui.

The two already knew each other well. Like enemies meeting on a narrow path, they wasted no time on words, immediately beginning to fight it out.

However, as Yan Zhaoge had expected, having to also devote some of his energies to suppressing the Devilish Domain Grand Formation and the Great Nine Underworlds Door, Shi Tie was unable to meet Sima Chui with his full strength.

One hand pressing on the golden tower, Shi Tie was temporarily unable to freely shift his position, only able to face the enemy where he was.

However, he met all variations with none, resembling a lone rock, unyielding and eternal amidst the tempestuous storms and the shocking waves.

His defensive techniques sealed off all attacks, not even letting a drop of water through, not giving the enemy any chance at all.

Even with his continuous barrage of mighty attacks, Sima Chui was unable to advance a single step.

However, Yan Zhaoge's expression was calm and heavy, not having yet relaxed.

Ah Hu also stopped smiling, swivelling his head and looking in a

single direction along with Xu Fei.

There, several shadows flickered, entering this world that was enveloped by red light.

Yan Zhaoge found some of these people familiar. Even if he did not, their garb of martial practitioners of Broad Creed Mountain also told him that these were the martial practitioners Broad Creed Mountain had originally stationed here at Lianhu County.

Their cultivation bases varied, some being Martial Scholars while some were still only Martial Artists.

However, the commonality of all of them was that their spirits were currently dulled, their forms limp as they had clearly been compromised.

Some of them were wounded, yet, unable to receive any treatment, were only able to watch as fresh blood flowed unceasingly from their injuries.

Beside these Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners was a group of martial practitioners with a bit of a devilish air on them.

Upon seeing one of them, Yan Zhaoge's gaze hardened slightly.

His entire body covered in a black robe, a hood over his head, the only half of his face that could be seen covered by a dark black mask.

HSSB 279: Someone Who Came Back From Hell

Like Zhang Yao, Ye Zhongzhou and the others who had been captured by Liu Shengfeng back during the Turbid Wave Pavilion incident, these Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners had evidently also been harmed and tortured.

Their captors had attempted to force them into despair, hatred and rage and, unable to easily extricate themselves from these negative emotions, they would finally lose control of their minds. With devilish intent rapidly being nurtured and born within them and under the influence of the aura of the Nine Underworlds, they would quickly fall to the dark side.

These Decimating Abyss martial practitioners were varied in their cultivation bases, but Yan Zhaoge paid special attention to five of them.

Amidst the breathing of the five, their breaths resembled thunder, the pulsing of their acupoints resembled true divinities, their aura-qis filled with spirituality yet having returned to simplicity-they were clearly all Martial Grandmasters.

The five Martial Grandmasters varied in their cultivation bases as well. Of those, Yan Zhaoge and Xu Fei both recognised one of them, a white-haired old man, as a late Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster of Broad Creed Mountain.

However, his eyes were yellowed and they emanated a bloodred

light; he had clearly already fallen completely to the dark side.

However, what drew Yan Zhaoge's and Xu Fei's attention the most was still the one beside that white-haired old man.

It was the masked man whom they had once clashed with.

The gazes of the other Decimating Abyss Martial Grandmasters were also fixed on Yan Zhaoge, Xu Fei and Ah Hu.

There was only that man, who was completely enveloped in a black robe, who now suddenly raised his head. His gaze burned as he looked at Shi Tie, who was currently battling with Sima Chui overhead.

His entire face was completely concealed by his mask, with only two yellowed eyes visible that emanated a piercing, bloodred light.

Though Shi Tie was busy suppressing the golden tower whilst also clashing with Sima Chui, he could still sense and observe the many things that were happening around him.

The arrival of the group below did not escape his eyes.

Looking at the pupils of that masked martial practitioner which seemed to be blazing at this moment, Shi Tie's eternally firm, unchanging gaze abruptly flickered.

On the side of the Decimating Abyss, that white-haired old man was looking at Yan Zhaoge's group.

The other Decimating Abyss martial practitioners were also looking warily at Yan Zhaoge, Xu Fei and Ah Hu.

Seeing Shi Tie, Yan Zhaoge and the others, the faces of the captured Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners regained their glow.

After glancing at that white-haired old man, Yan Zhaoge's gaze came to rest on that masked person once more.

Gazing at him, Yan Zhaoge said slowly, "Got a new mask?"

"But it holds no significance at all. Whatever there was to see, I already saw it back in that foreign dimension."

Yan Zhaoge sighed, "It is senior apprentice-brother Shi, Shi Songtao, isn't it? While we hoped that you could return safely, we really never thought that it would be in this manner."

That masked martial practitioner now finally retracted his gaze that had been on Shi Tie, looking indifferently towards Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge shook his head, "Do you think that I was bluffing? Even if I had not been certain earlier, the way you looked at eldest apprentice-uncle just now has already made everything clear."

Looking at the mask on the other party's face, Xu Fei could not help but reveal a desolate look within his gaze.

Yan Zhaoge said quietly, "If I do not guess wrongly, in not using your original martial arts, it is actually not that you are afraid of us seeing through your identity. It is because you hate Broad Creed Mountain, hate the martial arts that eldest apprentice-uncle passed down to you, therefore purposefully discarding and not using them."

"Using a mask to hide your face, it is also from not wanting to be recognised, but more from not wanting others to mention that you had once been a Broad Creed Mountain disciple, eldest apprentice-uncle's son."

Yan Zhaoge's tone was complicated, "You hate everything of your past being mentioned; it's not that you are ashamed of what you have become."

On hearing his words, the Decimating Abyss martial practitioners here had various different expressions spring up on their faces, clear looks of shock evident within their gazes.

Swivelling his head to look at the one beside him, that white-haired old man also had a rather strange expression on his face, "You...you are Songtao, Shi Tie's son? That year, didn't you..."

That masked martial practitioner remained silent, but his gaze that was focused in Yan Zhaoge's direction clearly held more

anger.

Yan Zhaoge sighed, “Since your identity has already been exposed, why do you still continue wearing that mask? Within your heart, it is not that you have no face to meet people ah.”

The black mask finally came off, revealing a face that was familiar whilst also foreign to Yan Zhaoge and the others.

It was a youth who looked to be in his early thirties.

His features bore a great ninety percent resemblance to Shi Tie’s, as if they had been etched out on the same stone.

Xu Fei’s mouth was full of bitterness as his virtually forced out from the gap between his teeth, “Senior, apprentice, brother, Shi!”

This Martial Grandmaster who had nearly assassinated Xu Fei in the Devilish Domain Grand Formation at Clear Concealed Lake was, shockingly, precisely the long-lost son of Shi Tie, the past genius of Broad Creed Mountain’s direct lineage, Shi Songtao!

Shocking Sima Chui into retreat with a single fist, Shi Tie’s gaze fell on Shi Songtao, not shifting away in a long time.

Having removed his mask, Shi Songtao no longer cared that his voice would be recognised, as he finally opened his mouth and spoke, “Long time no see, how’ve you been. I’m back from hell.”

Those simple words of greeting instead caused chills to run down their bodies.

The venomous resentment and coldness contained within that mild tone seemed to cut right into their bones.

Xu Fei asked with great difficulty, “Senior apprentice-brother Shi, have you been in the Decimating Abyss all these years? Was it them who saved you that year?”

Shi Songtao nodded mildly, “Otherwise, would it be you lot?”

He raised his head to look at Shi Tie on the tall golden tower, “Would it be him?”

Standing on the air, Shi Tie resembled a statue of stone as he remained completely unmoving.

“Junior apprentice-brother Xu, what do you want to say? Do you want to say that your Master, my father, had his own difficulties, and had no choice but to do what he did?” Shi Songtao’s tone was indifferent to the point that everyone was pervaded by a bone-deep chill, “Difficulties; everyone has those. However, this doesn’t mean that others would be able to understand them, to accept them.”

Shi Songtao raised his head to look at Shi Tie, “He chose to safeguard Broad Creed Mountain’s interests, choosing to take care

of the many, whilst sacrificing me in the process.”

“Sacrifice me; he just sacrificed me.”

Shi Songtao said mildly, “But if it were just that, I would actually not hate him. As the one who gave birth to me, I could just take it as returning this life of mine to him.”

“However, the ones who were sacrificed, was not just me!”

Shi Songtao’s tone finally fluctuated, bloodred light shooting out from his yellowed pupils as there seemed to be flames blazing within, “My wife, my son, were also sacrificed!”

“Yuzhen, my wife. She was not a Broad Creed Mountain disciple, but just because she married me, just because she was the daughter-in-law of Shi Tie, she had to become a sacrifice for Broad Creed Mountain as well?”

“Jun’er, he was just three that year, just an ignorant child-he also had to lose his life because of this?”

Shi Songtao stared at Shi Tie, “There are some questions that I have always wanted to ask you.”

“If those who had encountered danger were other Broad Creed Mountain disciples, and you could safeguard the clan’s interests whilst also saving us, which side would you choose?”

“If two sides met danger, and one side consisted of other Broad Creed Mountain disciples, while the other consisted of our family of three, which side would you choose?”

Shi Tie’s face was expressionless like a statue, but his low, heavy voice reverberated within the air, “This has nothing to do with who it is.”

Hearing his words, Shi Songtao chuckled, “Indeed an answer befitting of you.”

“In your heart, the group is more important than the individual; the greater number is more important than the smaller number. Responsibilities towards the clan preside over individual feelings.”

As he said thus, Shi Songtao suddenly strode out, “Then, why don’t you try making another choice right now.”

HSSB 280: Yan Zhaoge's Three Sentences

Shi Songtao came to where those captured Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners were, raising his head to look at Shi Tie.

A low, hoarse voice resounded, “Now, there are seven on my left, and fifteen on my right.”

Shi Songtao raised his head to look at Shi Tie, “If I say that I will wipe out all of those on one side, which side do you think it would be better for me to choose?”

Shi Tie's eyes emanated a cold, pressuring light, his palm that was on the surface of the golden tower moving slightly, but not shifting away.

He extended his free hand towards Shi Songtao, but was blocked by Sima Chui's attacking lance.

Shi Songtao said in an indifferent tone, “With your cultivation base, if you stop suppressing the formation's core, even with the ‘Scaly Dragon King’ blocking you, you would be able to kill all of us over from this distance.”

“However, you can't not care about the grand formation guiding the descent of the Nine Underworlds, right?”

Shi Songtao swivelled his head to look towards those Broad Creed

Mountain martial practitioners, “Your predicament now is like mine that year.”

“As compared to the consequences that the descent of the Nine Underworlds would bring about, possibly killing twenty thousand, two hundred thousand, two million people or even more, the lives of you twenty or so people, in Shi Tie’s heart, appear insignificant.”

Of those Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners, some bore complicated expressions, while others stubbornly glared furiously at Shi Songtao.

Shi Songtao looked at Shi Tie, “In that case,, I already know your answer to my question.”

He looked left and right, “Seven people and fifteen people-you would definitely wish to secure the fifteen.”

Shi Songtao laughed lightly, “The side with more people, right?”

Looks of despair instantly surfaced on the faces of the seven Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners to his left.

Still, Shi Songtao was not in a hurry to make his move as he instead swivelled his head to look towards his right, “But with these fifteen remaining people, if I were to split them into five on one side, and ten on the other, which side would you choose to secure?”

Shi Tie's gaze hardened.

Shi Songtao said mildly, "Still the side with the more people? That means securing ten, and forsaking five?"

"Very fitting with your style, but..." Shi Songtao spread his hands towards the sides as he said coldly, "That way, the people who lived would be ten, and the people who died would be twelve. Which side would be more, and which side would be less?"

Shi Tie looked at Shi Songtao, not speaking for a long time.

Shi Songtao's gaze similarly focused on that big figure hovering in mid-air.

"Senior apprentice-brother Shi, I'll interrupt you for a moment," Yan Zhaoge suddenly said, "My words are not many, only consisting of three sentences."

"The first sentence is that many a time, in many matters, it is not a simple choice of more or less. With eldest apprentice-uncle's personality, if he really were to choose, I feel that he would not choose to sacrifice the greater number, nor sacrifice the smaller number, and would instead choose to sacrifice himself."

Yan Zhaoge looked at Shi Songtao, "There is an old saying that it is none other than the father who knows the son best. Flip it around and it still holds some meaning. I feel that your

understanding of eldest apprentice-uncle should be deeper than mine.”

Shi Songtao’s gaze moved from Shi Tie over to Yan Zhaoge as he remained coldly indifferent and silent.

Yan Zhaoge met his gaze calmly, “The second sentence, is actually a question.”

“Sister Yuzhen and Jun’er-are they already dead, or are they like how you are now?”

Shi Songtao’s wife, surnamed Ying, named Yuzhen, was a solitary practitioner by birth. Having gotten acquainted with Shi Songtao, the two had gotten on splendidly, eventually getting married, living happily together.

Afterwards, the son they had borne had been given the name Shi Jun. It was still a name that the old Chief, Yuan Zhengfeng had helped to come up with.

The days after Shi Jun had been born had been the happiest times for Shi Tie’s and Shi Songtao’s family.

Sadly, the good times did not last, as that disaster befell soon after.

Shi Songtao’s family of three all encountered danger, and disappeared without a trace, making recovering their bodies not

possible at all.

Today, Shi Songtao had reappeared once more, but Ying Yuzhen and Shi Jun were still nowhere to be seen.

As Yan Zhaoge, Shi Tie and Xu Fei looked at Shi Songtao's appearance which resembled that of a wounded lone wolf, their hearts all sunk.

Rather than Xu Fei or Shi Tie, this question was finally still asked by Yan Zhaoge.

Hearing it, Shi Songtao abruptly sucked in a deep breath, the rage and pain within his gaze more visibly intense than before.

Looking at Shi Songtao, Yan Zhaoge slowly said, "The third sentence..."

Now, Yan Zhaoge suddenly moved!

The cloak formed of the feathers of cranes on his shoulders abruptly flipped open, transforming into two massive wings, which shook as he shot towards Shi Songtao's group at lightning speed!

Yan Zhaoge's right eye flickered with the purplish-green light of lightning. The next moment, a round purple orb appeared above his head.

An old, ancient aura emanated as flickering with the light of thunder, the orb suddenly moved!

Resembling a human eye, it lightly blinked.

Rumblerumblerumblerumble!

With the intense roar of lightning, the sphere of light transformed into a thunderbolt, instantly ripping space apart!

The speed of the thunderbolt was such that no one was able to react to it at all, as it shot towards that white-haired old man who was a late Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster.

Resembling the descent of heavenly thunderbolts, destroying all taint and evil!

The moment Yan Zhaoge moved, that white-haired old man was alerted to it.

The acupoints of his entire body pulsed as his aura-qi circulated, in an effort to flash away and evade.

However, the thunderbolt was truly too fast!

It was so quick that his mind and his body were completely unable to react at all. He was left with no time to think or make

judgements, and not even the most instinctive of reactions were able to be executed!

Following Yan Zhaoge's ascent to the Martial Grandmaster realm, when wielding the Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment and fully blazing and unleashing An Instant's Thunder, his power truly skyrocketed!

Rumblerumblerumblerumble!

The thunderbolt exploded over the white-haired old man's head, shattering the aura-qi guarding his body, shattering the armour guarding him.

It went on to quickly reduce his highly-tempered fleshly body, even tougher than most metals, into a gory haze of blood!

Instakill!

Direct instakill!

A martial practitioner at the third level of the Martial Grandmaster realm, at the late Spirit Vessel stage, directly killed on the spot by An Instant's Thunder!

From Yan Zhaoge having moved to the moment when the white-haired old man's body was blown to smithereens, not even the time it takes to blink an eye had passed!

And extending the Immortal Crane Wings, Yan Zhaoge was instantly before them all.

A green sword-light that resembled an azure dragon crossing the heavens flashed by.

Of the five Martial Grandmasters of the Decimating Abyss, following the white-haired old man, another of them, an early Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster, was nailed to death on the spot!

Having already received reminders from Yan Zhaoge earlier via sound transmission with his aura-qi, Xu Fei and Ah Hu also rushed out, each dealing with one of the two remaining Decimating Abyss Martial Grandmasters.

At the same time, Yan Zhaoge arrived by Shi Songtao's side.

Dim light shone in Shi Songtao's hands as he struck out at Yan Zhaoge with a sword.

Intercrossing his hands, Yan Zhaoge shifted his body, continuously exerting force with his feet, resembling the shifting of stars as he instantly maneuvered behind Shi Songtao.

He hacked out with his left hand. With the rumbling of thunder, resembling a massive heaven-splitting blade, it hacked down on Shi Songtao's sword-wielding arm!

As a muffled snapping sound resounded, Shi Songtao's left elbow instantly fell limp, the sword within his hands falling to the ground.

"I will be offending you," At the same time, Yan Zhaoge kicked out, stomping down on Shi Songtao's knee.

Resembling a lumberjack hacking down a great tree with the swinging of a mighty axe, he directly forced Shi Songtao's down onto the ground on one knee!

Yan Zhaoge extended his right hand, fingers forming a claw, as he grabbed onto Shi Songtao's neck from behind, suppressing the latter till he was completely unable to move.

"The third sentence..." Yan Zhaoge exhaled, "Of my twenty-two fellow disciples here, senior apprentice-brother Shi, you will not be killing a single one of them."

Accompanied by his words, only now did the white-haired old man's flesh and blood, smitten by the thunderbolt, splatter down onto the ground in an all-encompassing rain of blood!

HSSB 281: Thunderbolt-Like Methods

Hearing the resounding of thunderbolts, the Decimating Abyss martial practitioners here were all greatly shocked.

They all looked towards the strongest of their number, that white-haired old man, only to see him shockingly splattering down in a rain of blood!

They were all stunned, and stood there listlessly as the flesh and blood splattered onto their faces. They were unable to believe that the white-haired old man, a late Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster, had been instantly slain on the spot just like that!

Only when his dispersed blood vaporised in the form of black smoke, and finally vanished without a trace, did they regain their wits.

But in just that blink of an eye, Yan Zhaoge had killed another, and had at the same time taken down Shi Songtao!

Against these Decimating Abyss martial practitioners who had yet to become Martial Grandmasters, Yan Zhaoge stood where he was, the Immortal Crane Wings unfurled behind his back.

Like a rain of light the crane feathers shot out in all directions, and instantly riddled all the Decimating Abyss martial practitioners with holes.

On the other side, Xu Fei and Ah Hu were also taking care of their two opponents.

The originally captured Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners now discovered that in the blink of an eye, their safety had all been secured!

They were stunned, and all looked to Yan Zhaoge who, resembling the descent of a heavenly soldier, had instantly swept all the enemies clear.

Without even a chance to hold them hostage or kill them to vent anger all of the Decimating Abyss martial practitioners, Shi Songtao included, had already been swept up by the trio led by Yan Zhaoge in an instant.

Looking at Yan Zhaoge's relaxed appearance, it seemed that if not for fear of the Decimating Abyss Martial Grandmasters possibly hurting or killing them, even without Xu Fei or Ah Hu having to move, he himself could have forcibly cleared the area on his own.

Even Shi Tie and Sima Chui, clashing in mid-air, split up some on their attention to focus below.

This time, however, it was Shi Tie attacking, causing Sima Chui to be unable to think about anything else.

Yan Zhaoge stood where he was, unceasingly breathing and moderating his condition.

Now, the purple orb formed of the Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment completely dimmed, fully run dry of spirituality.

It resembled a dusty stone orb, unremarkable to the extreme, as it was kept by Yan Zhaoge.

An Instant's Thunder, focusing and blazing all its power in a single instant.

After a single blow, the power Yan Zhaoge could currently unleash from the Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment would all be depleted.

However, it was also precisely because of this that the power of An Instant's Lightning was so remarkable.

That white-haired old man, being of the late Spirit Vessel stage, having formed a spirit seed, birthed spirit sprouts, and already being on the road to forming a true martial soul, was one who had experienced countless battles in the past, and possessed great experience as well as great strength.

In facing Yan Zhaoge in a head-on battle, regardless of who the victory went to, it was definitely not be something that could be decided in a single exchange.

However, now, he had been blown up by Yan Zhaoge's An Instant's Thunder to the point that not even his corpse or his

bones remained!

An Instant's Thunder possessed incredible power, able to decimate both gods and ghosts, but the power of the Sacred Artifact fragment was closely linked to Yan Zhaoge's own essence, qi and mind.

As the Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment fell dim at this moment, Yan Zhaoge's own essence, qi and mind also deteriorated greatly.

Yan Zhaoge had been prepared for this beforehand. As he had unleashed the power of the Sacred Artifact fragment, in that short instant, he had also erupted with all of his potential, going all out in that moment before his condition truly deteriorated, capturing Shi Songtao and instantly killing his other opponent.

At this moment, Yan Zhaoge had Shi Songtao held by his neck, and was suppressing the circulation of his aura-qi and shaking his flesh and blood such that the latter was unable to move.

However, Yan Zhaoge could clearly feel that Shi Songtao was still resisting, struggling unceasingly.

Beneath his skin, an explosive force surged unceasingly, shocking Yan Zhaoge's fingers to the point of numbness.

Even having the other by his vitals, with his energy deteriorating alongside the Eye of the Thunder Emperor fragment, for just those

few breaths of time, Yan Zhaoge felt like he was almost unable to hold Shi Songtao.

However, accompanied by Yan Zhaoge's breathing and moderating of his condition, he gradually recovered some of his strength, and still held Shi Songtao firmly.

Xu Fei and Ah Hu also very quickly finished their individual opponents.

Ah Hu came beside Yan Zhaoge, questioning him with his gaze. Yan Zhaoge shook his head slightly, indicating that he didn't require his help.

Meanwhile, Xu Fei helped those injured fellow disciples while settling his gaze on Shi Songtao.

In mid-air, seeing that he was unable to do anything to Shi Tie, also noting how the golden tower suppressed by Shi Tie was getting shorter and shorter, Sima Chui knew that if he didn't retreat quickly, Shi Tie would be completely released at the moment when that golden tower was completely levelled.

At that time, whether he would be able to retreat successfully was an unknown.

Waving his lance, Sima Chui began to retreat.

Shi Tie expanded his fist-intent, enveloping the surrounding area

and guarding Yan Zhaoge and the others. He didn't chase Sima Chui, his palm still pressing on the surface of the tall golden tower.

Suppressed by him, the tall golden tower shrunk unceasingly.

The Devilish Domain Grand Formation was already on the verge of collapse at this moment.

With Yan Zhaoge suppressing Shi Songtao, the other rescued Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners could finally heave a sigh of relief. It was just that their gazes began moving between Shi Tie and Shi Songtao, a strange atmosphere brewing within the air.

“Ah Hu,” Yan Zhaoge sighed lightly.

Ah Hu nodded, substituting Xu Fei's role, helping those Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners to treat their injuries, at the same time also beginning to take them out of this place.

Bearing complicated feelings, the Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners were silent as they finally left with Ah Hu without asking anything.

Xu Fei's expression was solemn as he came before Shi Songtao.

Shi Songtao instead calmed at this moment.

He was currently unable to swivel his head to look at Yan Zhaoge

behind him, but he still said in a mild tone, “Your reputation is well deserved.”

Yan Zhaoge asked, “Senior apprentice-brother Shi, I have offended you. Still, that second sentence of mine just now, that question-what exactly is the answer?”

Shi Songtao suddenly fell silent.

On the top of the golden tower, his gaze sweeping Shi Songtao’s entire body, Shi Tie suddenly said, “Check his Shadow Shrinking Pouch.”

Xu Fei nodded, searching out a Shadow Shrinking Pouch from Shi Songtao’s body.

Shi Songtao looked coldly at him and Shi Tie, his gaze finally coming to rest on that Shadow Shrinking Pouch, a pained look appearing within his eyes.

Opening that Shadow Shrinking Pouch, three transparent ice coffins appeared within. One was completely empty, while the other two were occupied.

One of the occupants was a beautiful woman who looked to be in her early twenties, just that her eyes were tightly shut, as she was seemingly in a deep slumber.

The other contained a young boy who looked to be around ten

years of age.

The shape of the boy's face was similar to the woman's while the area between his brows was similar to Shi Tie and Shi Songtao.

Xu Fei's expression did not relax, "Jun'er still has life in him, but it is also hanging by a thread. But Sister Yuzhen..."

Yan Zhaoge looked over. Shi Tie's grandson and Shi Songtao's son Shi Jun had been but three when he had gone missing that year. By his appearance now, it was just like he had grown up naturally.

However, the situation was just not an optimistic one.

As for Shi Songtao's wife Ying Yuzhen, looking at her current condition, it was doubtful if she still lived...

"These ice coffins temporarily seal their bodies. In the meantime, we must properly think of a plan," Yan Zhaoge looked at Shi Songtao, "Senior apprentice-brother Shi, at this point, why not speak honestly on some matters? That year, who exactly was it that saved you, while also guiding you to join the Nine Underworlds? Was it someone of our clan?"

HSSB 282: Origins Of The Decimating Abyss

Hearing Yan Zhaoge's question, Shi Songtao was silent for a long time before he asked quietly, "You should already have guesses of your own?"

Yan Zhaoge and Xu Fei looked at him, Shi Tie's gaze also focusing on him.

Shi Songtao raised his head to meet Shi Tie's gaze, saying in an indifferent tone, "Actually, I have never seen his true face. When he saved me and passed down the Dark Light Killing Arts and other martial arts to me included; I have never truly met him face to face before."

"However, if you ask me, I feel that it is senior apprentice-uncle Fang."

Hearing his words, Shi Tie's eyes shone with a brilliant light as he fixed his gaze closely on his son.

Yan Zhaoge's and Xu Fei's gazes hardened.

"Since you have never seen his true face before, how can you be sure that that is second apprentice-uncle?" Yan Zhaoge asked in a heavy tone, "Based on voice? People with such a cultivation base can already disguise their voices, with it very difficult for us to distinguish at our level."

Shi Songtao said mildly, “That’s why I say that it is just a feeling.”

“Of course, it is not baseless. This deduction of mine is based on the fact that the Abyss Lord, not relying on the Earth Domain, can still guide the Devilish Domain Grand Formation to cause the descent of the Nine Underworlds. Consolidating some clues, I arrived at this conclusion.”

His neck being held by Yan Zhaoge, he was unable to swivel his head around, but he still asked Yan Zhaoge, “Why do you think that senior apprentice-uncle Fang, Fang Zhun, originally of the moderate faction like the clan’s longtime Elders, later turned forceful and aggressive in style, becoming like our fathers?”

Shi Songtao looked at Shi Tie, “You don’t really believe that it is because he and Grand Master both lean towards toughness that senior apprentice-uncle Fang changed in direction?”

“A figure like senior apprentice-uncle Fang-is it possible for him to change so easily?”

Shi Songtao’s expression was indifferent as no despondence, sadness, happiness or mockery could be seen within it whatsoever, his tone mild as clear water.

Restricting his movements from behind, Yan Zhaoge asked, “Second apprentice-uncle is the Decimating Abyss’s Lord?”

From the higher echelon Decimating Abyss experts that they had captured earlier, Yan Zhaoge and the others of Broad Creed Mountain had come to know that their leader was internally known by them as the Abyss Lord.

In actual fact, the true leader of the martial practitioners who had joined the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss was the Nine Underworlds.

While the Abyss Lord was the peak expert amongst them all, with the greatest level of understanding towards the Nine Underworlds, grasping many secrets.

From a certain perspective, he was like the spokesman of the Nine Underworlds.

Guiding the descent of the Nine Underworlds and a grand formation to form a domain of devilish qi had been proposed by the Abyss Lord.

As for whether it had been created on his own or the method had been obtained through communication with the Nine Underworlds, no one knew.

At the same time, the Abyss Lord was also extremely mysterious, with no one knowing of his true identity at all.

“The Devil Saint Yuan Tian is not their Lord ah...” Yan Zhaoge looked at Shi Songtao, “Your meaning is that the change in second

apprentice-uncle's usual style and way of thinking is related to the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss?"

Shi Songtao said mildly, "You should also know of Broad Creed Mountain's radical faction's evaluation of the moderate faction?"

"Perhaps through senior apprentice-uncle Yan's influence, I remember that you also have the style and way of thinking of the radical faction."

While he was before Shi Tie, while it was words on some seniors of the clan, Yan Zhaoge still said calmly, "Conservative and delusional, impractical, placing their hopes on our enemies."

A considerable portion of Broad Creed Mountain had lived through Broad Creed Mountain's darkest ages back during that time. Those longtime Elders that still lived now hoped to avoid going into conflict with outside enemies, with the Sacred Sun Clan at their head, as much as possible, silently accumulating their strength till they grew powerful and rose up once more.

When it was necessary for such, some sacrifices and concessions could be made, in order to gain more time.

This form of thought was the same as the method of operation of the Heaven Diviner Zhan Xilou when he had been in power back then.

At that time, it was this way that Broad Creed Mountain had

slowly made it past their darkest ages, finally inviting the light of spring once more.

However, with the old Chief Yuan Zhengfeng at their head, the senior generation of experts, led by Yan Di, Shi Tie and some others, held the opposite view.

Because as they saw it, at the same time that they were developing, the other powers, like the Sacred Sun Clan, were all improving in strength as well.

The other powers would not be as kind as to remain where they were, waiting for Broad Creed Mountain to develop and catch up to them, to the point of even surpassing them.

Not just that, suppression, restrictions and attacks would descend like a tide.

The current era now was already different from when the Heaven Diviner, Zhan Xilou, had been in power.

The greatest difference was that, Zhan Xilou was already no more!

A matter that all disciples of Broad Creed Mountain conceded was that when the Exalted Heaven Shaker Zhan Dongge had perished that year, with Broad Creed Mountain tragically suffering great casualties, taking a great blow to its vitality, if not for Zhan Xilou, Broad Creed Mountain would probably not exist today.

Because of Zhan Xilou's presence, the Broad Creed Mountain of that time had been able to persist on amidst their sufferings and accumulate their strength, able to guarantee that their core interests were not compromised, having the background to remain unflinching at their bottom line.

And now, if they still remained fully conservative and willing to make concessions, that would be no different from blind observance.

Depositing their hopes onto the enemy was something that the radical faction was unable to accept.

Shi Songtao said, "Then, under what conditions do you feel that the moderate faction's thoughts are feasible?"

Yan Zhaoge knit his brows, "Unless, the Sacred Sun Clan is like how our clan was that year."

Broad Creed Mountain's deterioration had begun from the invasion of the Flame Devil World, numerous casualties surfacing as countless Broad Creed Mountain experts surged to meet the Flame Devils in battle.

That had not happened on Broad Creed Mountain's territory, in the Heaven Domain.

And as Yan Zhaoge saw it, if the thoughts of the moderate faction

were not to remain as building castles in the air, it was only possible that something like what had happened with the invasion of the Flame Devils that year occurred once more, with the casualties definitely primarily having to be of the Sacred Sun Clan or the Heavenly Thunder Hall.

If it happened in the Heaven Domain, in Broad Creed Mountain's territory, there would completely be no need to speak about what would happen afterwards.

Yan Zhaoge looked at Shi Songtao, "You mean to say that second apprentice-uncle who still had been of the moderate faction then moved his attention to Hell, to the Nine Underworlds? He wanted to lead the Nine Underworlds to descend on the territory of the Sacred Sun Clan, artificially inducing a great disaster for the Sacred Sun Clan?"

Changes finally appeared on Shi Songtao's face as a rather mocking smile was revealed, "The history of the Decimating Abyss is not long. With the intense shaking of the Earth Domain, more and more people will be more and more easily affected by the Nine Underworlds, with it all being things that happened in recent years. It was from someone entering the depths of Hell, attempting to uncover the secrets within, opening that great, forbidden door."

"Sadly, in the end, some stubbornness and evil thoughts within his mind were possibly guided by the Nine Underworlds, finally transforming into devilish intent. Originally having wanted to use the descent of the Nine Underworlds as a method, it instead became his goal."

“Why did he lean towards the radical faction afterwards? It was because he discovered that the more intense the conflict between Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan, two Sacred Grounds of the Eight Extremities World, the greater the chance for the Nine Underworlds to strike ah.”

“Earlier, whether radical or moderate, it was all for Broad Creed Mountain. However, now, it is all for the Decimating Abyss, with radical or moderate no longer important. It is no longer ideology, rather being disguise and methods, because the goal for which he fights has already changed.”

Shi Songtao’s expression was also a little complicated, “The Decimating Abyss that has brought disaster onto Broad Creed Mountain and the Eight Extremities World today was precisely created by one of Broad Creed Mountain’s own ah...”

Xu Fei and Yan Zhaoge exchanged looks.

Shi Tie’s expression was calm and stern as he pressed down on the golden tower with his palm.

Now, the golden tower completely vanished, finally having been completely suppressed by Shi Tie.

Shi Tie’s expression was unchanging, not flustered in the least as he walked over towards them.

HSSB 283: The Perilous Sword

Shi Tie came before Shi Songtao, his great frame resembling a mountain.

However, Yan Zhaoge's and Xu Fei's hearts both fell.

While his back was still ramrod straight and his features still firm, one could clearly sense a seldom felt heavy air on Shi Tie's body.

Shi Tie shook his head slightly, saying to Yan Zhaoge, "Hand him to me."

Saying thus, he extended his hand, his fist-intent surging as it landed on Shi Songtao's body.

Yan Zhaoge nodded, his palm leaving Shi Songtao's neck as he retreated.

But just in the instant where Shi Tie's fist-intent suppressed Shi Songtao, Shi Songtao's face suddenly changed!

The expressions of Shi Tie, Yan Zhaoge and Xu Fei also changed slightly at this moment.

From within Shi Songtao's body, an immense force suddenly erupted!

As Shi Tie's expression hurriedly changed, his fist-intent instantly manifested, clear light illuminating the surrounding area, enveloping Shi Songtao's entire body, wanting to suppress that great force.

As fresh blood spurted madly from his mouth due to the rampaging force he felt within his body, Shi Songtao's gaze revealed shock.

His entire body trembled, every single bone, every single blood vessel, every single acupoint resembling the eruption of a flash flood at this moment.

Just standing by the side, not having neared, Yan Zhaoge and Xu Fei could already feel the infinite, boundless sword-intent appearing within Shi Songtao's body.

At this moment, Shi Songtao's entire person seemed to be formed of sword-qi and sword-intent.

Infinite sword-intent shot out from within Shi Songtao's body in an unending stream.

All of Shi Songtao's pores were dripping blood, seemingly about to erupt in simultaneous geysers, transforming into innumerable bloodied swords as his entire person broke apart.

That vast, majestic sword-intent evoked both the limitless height

of the heavens and the dense heaviness of the great earth.

Amidst that sword, it was like a whole new heaven and earth.

It was just that at this moment, it seemed about to turn Shi Songtao's body into a heaven and earth of flesh and blood.

And the target of this sword intent was Shi Tie!

The vast, powerful force left Yan Zhaoge and Xu Fei unable to even near.

However, this sword-intent was definitely not foreign to them.

Of Broad Creed Mountain's Three Supreme Arts, the Limitless Heavenly Sword!

Created by the Heaven Diviner Zhan Xilou that year, it was a supreme martial art ranked alongside the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm and the Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre!

However, at this moment, its target was a martial practitioner of Broad Creed Mountain!

Shi Tie's gaze flickered with light as he sucked in a deep breath, his entire person exuding the appearance of Vajra as he was bright and transparent as glass.

His powerful fist-intent was circulated to the maximum, suppressing the force suddenly erupting from within Shi Songtao's body.

But the first thing that this force emanating from Shi Songtao's body wrecked was Shi Songtao's body itself.

Shi Tie grit his teeth, and separated his palms, forming a distorting suction force. He was no longer only suppressing the sword intent, but guiding it as well.

The terrifying sword-intent condensed into a tangible sword-light, resembling an unstoppable steed as it shot out of Shi Songtao's body, headed straight for Shi Tie!

Shi Tie's features were tough as granite as he instead shed his high-grade spirit artifact, the Profound Light Divine Armour, at this critical moment.

The Profound Light Divine Armour transformed into a black light, enveloping Shi Songtao's body, wanting to temporarily suppress his body that was on the brink of shattering.

However, just at this time, the clear, majestic sword-light flickered with strands of strange golden light.

The numerous strands of golden light actually entangled the Profound Light Divine Armour, obstructing it for a moment.

While that majestic-sword light struck Shi Tie's vitals at his chest straight on!

A strong light erupted on Shi Tie's body, flashing incessantly.

However, that sword-light seemed infinite and boundless as it unceasingly beat down mightily on Shi Tie's body.

Roaring, Shi Tie punched mightily, shattering that sword-light.

Looking over, Yan Zhaoge and Xu Fei saw that while Shi Tie's chest was not bleeding, it appeared to have broken and caved in deeply as it was densely riddled with numerous cracks.

That concept, unbreakable, inextinguishable as Vajra, also dimmed greatly at this moment.

Shi Tie's expression did not change in the least as it was like he completely couldn't feel any pain at all.

He looked towards Shi Songtao, an irrepressible look of sorrow revealed within his eyes.

While he had guided the sword-intent to attack himself in time, also attempting to protect Shi Songtao's body with the Profound Light Divine Armour, the sword-intent had originally been emitted from within Shi Songtao's body. Whether or not it harmed Shi Tie, Shi Songtao would also have to bear this sword first.

And this sword was not something that Shi Songtao could withstand.

Whilst concealing sword-intent within Shi Songtao's body, the other party had also secretly set up other traps within.

The essence of the unique flower Dormant Dragon's Slumber, rare within this world, specifically suppressing the main material used in forging Profound Light Divine Armour, Profound Light Divine Iron.

While Shi Tie had been swift in his reaction, going all out, Shi Songtao had still received a heavy blow.

Shi Songtao opened his mouth, chuckling as he completely seemed not to mind the blood gushing unceasingly from within, "Unexpected, unexpected; senior apprentice-uncle Fang actually buried sword-intent within my body. I also don't know when..."

He looked at Shi Tie, "Hah, looks like it was specifically prepared for you. Only your fist-intent could stimulate this sword-intent to emerge. After all, you cultivate in the Vajra Body, your fist-intent different from others, unique under these heavens..."

"That golden light, was Dormant Dragon's Slumber? Also specifically used to deal with your Profound Light Divine Armour..."

Shi Tie held his injured chest with one hand, his other hand suppressing Shi Songtao's body with his fist-intent, not letting it shatter.

He sucked in a deep breath, first swivelling his head to look at Yan Zhaoge and Xu Fei as he said in a heavy tone, "Immediately report to the clan at the quickest speed, reporting the spy, whose identity is the Lord of the Decimating Abyss."

Shi Tie paused with every word, "The Decimating Abyss's Lord, is not junior apprentice-brother Fang, but senior apprentice-uncle Xin, Xin Dongping!"

Yan Zhaoge and Xu Fei both raised their brows, whereas a stunned look appeared within Shi Songtao's gaze.

"Hearing Songtao's words, also bearing this sword, I can now confirm this matter," Shi Tie shook his head slowly as he looked at Shi Songtao, "You have been misled."

Shi Songtao met Shi Tie's eyes, saying mildly after a long time had passed, "You are forever prioritising the clan's matters before your own."

"Why do you not feel that it was not me knowing the truth but intentionally withholding it, trying to mislead and deceive you?"

"You hold control over the clan's punishments, knowing all of Broad Creed Mountain's punishment methods, with interrogations

being your speciality, but you have still yet to move. On what basis can you determine that I did not cheat you, with I being the one who was misled?”

Shi Tie said calmly, “I can tell.”

Shi Songtao was silent for a while before he said, “To me, whether or not senior apprentice-uncle Fang is the Abyss Lord is actually not important.”

He swivelled his head to look at the two crystalline coffins which contained his wife’s and son’s bodies, “To me, what’s important is them.”

Shi Songtao looked at the third crystalline coffin, sighing, “After a fallen practitioner dies, he dissipates into nothing. Even in death, I will also be unable to accompany them.”

While being suppressed by Shi Tie’s fist-intent, Shi Songtao’s body which had originally been on the brink of collapse finally began to completely disintegrate at this moment.

His expression was mild, as though he didn’t mind this at all, only endless longing visible within his gaze that was on his wife and son.

Yan Zhaoge suddenly asked, “Senior apprentice-brother Shi, within your heart, is what you hate actually the fact that eldest apprentice-uncle prioritised his responsibility to the clan, setting

his personal feelings aside back then, or is it your own powerlessness to protect your wife and child?”

Shi Songtao said in an indifferent tone, “It’s all no longer important...”

His voice lingered for a moment before dissipating within the air.

Shi Tie watched Shi Songtao’s body disintegrate.

His entire person resembled a statue.

HSSB 284: The Martial Repository Does Not Simply Contain An Otherworldly Expert

Accompanied by his death, Shi Songtao's body transformed into black smoke, dissipating within the air.

Shi Tie shut his eyes, standing where he was, not speaking for a long time.

But very quickly, he reopened his eyes. While the wound on his chest was still there, he stood tall and unyielding once more.

Shi Tie swivelled his head to look at Yan Zhaoge and Xu Fei, with Yan Zhaoge saying, "I have already asked Ah Hu to notify the clan."

"The Devilish Domain Grand Formation at Lianhu Lake has already been taken care of. Let us hurry back to the clan, talking on the way," Shi Tie raised his hand, air currents sweeping Yan Zhaoge and Xu Fei along as he flew into the air, "I hope that we can still make it in time."

Those three crystalline coffins had already been kept by Yan Zhaoge into Shi Songtao's Shadow Shrinking Pouch before passing it over to Shi Tie, who had accepted it silently.

After instructing the other Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners come to perform the cleanup, bringing Ah Hu and Pan-Pan along, Shi Tie took to the air, speeding back to Broad

Creed Mountain.

Yan Zhaoge and the others all looked worriedly at the injury on Shi Tie's chest.

That injury was not a light one. More importantly, Shi Tie cultivated in the Vajra Body, his entire body perfect and without flaws, attack and defence in one, possessing great strength.

However, as soon as damage was incurred, there would be flaws in the Vajra Body, causing Shi Tie to see a notable decrease in strength. It was not merely a simple injury.

For some martial practitioners, they could forcibly suppress their injuries. While there might be negative side-effects, it would not affect the unleashing of their strength within a short period of time.

However, Shi Tie would be unavoidably affected by it now.

In clashing with enemies in this following period of time, his condition would only increasingly worsen.

Shi Tie, however, had on a calm expression, tough as granite, seemingly not affected in the least.

As they hurried, he said, "There are some things that you are aware of, but there are also some things that you are unaware of."

“The existence that is the Nine Underworlds has been there since ancient times. However, people don’t understand many things about it, remaining conservative and wary of investigating Hell due to their fear of the Nine Underworlds, progress being extremely slow in this area.”

“Junior apprentice-brother Fang walked deeper in than others, some secrets indeed having first been discovered by him.”

“However, he very quickly grew aware of the bewitchment of the Nine Underworlds on human minds, therefore stopping before the cliff in a timely manner and giving up on going in any further.”

Hearing his words, Yan Zhaoge’s gaze flashed, “From the very beginning, second apprentice-uncle Fang was of the radical faction!”

Xu Fei also sucked in a deep breath, looking straight at Shi Tie, “And also, he was even more radical than you and senior apprentice-uncle Yan, perhaps even the toughest, most aggressive person of the entire Broad Creed Mountain, almost to the point of not caring about any means!”

Shi Tie nodded, “Junior apprentice-brother Fang indeed once thought to bring about the descent of the Nine Underworlds in the territory of the Sacred Sun Clan.”

“Appearing to be of the moderate faction was actually to conceal his plans whilst also creating the false impression of him and

junior apprentice-brother Yan standing opposed to each other, with even their styles and way of thinking vastly different, causing the competition and tension between the two of them to look even greater amongst those of the outside world.”

“However, he very quickly discovered that that was actually the Nine Underworlds influencing his mind, attempting to turn him into a guide for their descent.”

Shi Tie said slowly, “Junior apprentice-brother Fang is no ordinary person. After discovering that he was gradually being led down the wrong path by the Nine Underworlds, he suppressed himself with an incomparably strong will, stopping what he had been working diligently on all this while before it was too late as he extricated himself from this pile of mud.”

“On the surface, junior apprentice-brother’s style began to change, switching from moderate to radical, but this was actually just him finally beginning to let his true thoughts show, just letting it proceed in gradual stages to avoid the change being too sudden.”

Shi Tie looked at Yan Zhaoze and Xu Fei, “It is only natural that the two of you do not know of this. Of the entire Broad Creed Mountain, other than junior apprentice-brother Fang himself, only I, Master, and junior apprentice-brother Yan know about this matter.”

On one hand, the more people knew, the more possible it was for them to be bewitched by the Decimating Abyss.

On the other, it was also to protect Fang Zhun's reputation. After all, it was not much of a glorious thing.

Shi Tie said, "When we first learnt of the existence of the Decimating Abyss, Master and I both immediately thought of junior apprentice-brother Fang, performing checks on him not just once."

"The investigations revealed that junior apprentice-brother Fang did not re-walk that old path, that the birth of the Decimating Abyss should not be related to him."

Shi Tie's voice grew low and heavy, "While junior apprentice-brother Fang stopped in time, someone picked up what he left behind, proceeding down this path."

Yan Zhaoge said slowly, "It is not possible for Grand Master or father to be the Abyss Lord. Otherwise, it would not be so troublesome; Broad Creed Mountain would already be destroyed."

"You are clearly also not him, eldest apprentice-uncle, and it is also most likely not second apprentice-uncle. With his previous experience, even while he had turned back from his mistakes, with the three of you paying careful attention to him, it wouldn't go to the extent of him walking back down that path once more."

"Therefore, eliminating the possibility of second apprentice-uncle managing to deceive all of you, that only leaves one person."

Yan Zhaoge's gaze turned cold, "With such high attainment in the Limitless Heavenly Sword, there are only two people under these heavens. One is second apprentice-uncle, while the other is Xin Dongping!"

Shi Tie said, "Junior apprentice-brother Fang indeed might have splendidly deceived us all."

"Therefore, without sufficient evidence, we could not be sure exactly who the Abyss Lord was. There was also the possibility that he was not of our Broad Creed Mountain."

"However, taking that sword today, I can be absolutely certain that if it is not junior apprentice-brother Fang, it can only be senior apprentice-uncle Xin."

Shi Tie's gaze was stern, "Perhaps it was that senior apprentice-uncle Xin inadvertently discovered junior apprentice-brother's Fang past research, continuing to proceed deeper in, or perhaps it was that he discovered it on his own. Regardless, at the end of the day, he still continued walking down this path, establishing the Decimating Abyss."

"Wanting to let the Decimating Abyss descend into the Eight Extremities World, to the point of creating all the chaos that has transpired."

Shi Tie gazed towards Broad Creed Mountain in the distance, his gaze virtually solidifying.

Xu Fei's brows were tightly knit, "In concealing his sword-intent within senior apprentice-brother Shi's body to harm you, it means that Elder Xin does not fear you finding out his identity."

"This means that our warning might already be too late. When we arrived at Lianhu County, beginning to deal with the Devilish Domain Grand Formation and encountering senior apprentice-brother Shi, I'm afraid that Elder Xin must already have begun making his move back at the clan!"

As he said this, in mid-journey, they received urgent news sent over from the clan.

The message was rather vague and unclear, but it caused all their hearts to tense.

An incident had arose in the Heaven Sealing Gorge, beneath the Water Ridge peak!

A domain of devilish qi, with the Heaven Sealing Gorge as its centre, was expanding within Broad Creed Mountain!

They all exchanged looks, as Yan Zhaoge let out a long breath, "While Xin Dongping has always concealed himself well, eldest apprentice-uncle, our clan shouldn't be unguarded towards him at all, right?"

Too much monitoring with a lack of trust could instead cause those who had originally been fine to rebel; Broad Creed Mountain

naturally wouldn't employ such methods.

However, people like Xin Dongping and Fang Zhun whom they clearly should worry about should naturally be observed more by them.

Shi Tie raced ahead at full speed, his gaze always focused in the direction of Broad Creed Mountain, not leaving it for a moment, "While we have been guarding against him, it is currently a volatile time of many matters."

"Especially with junior apprentice-brother Fang's current whereabouts unknown, the experts of our clan are stretched thin."

"With Master in seclusion, we can only depend more on junior apprentice-brother Yan this time."

Yan Zhaoge was also looking in the direction of Broad Creed Mountain, his brows knit, "Who says that Martial Repositories only contain otherworldly experts, a clan's foremost guardian treasures? They might also possibly contain something else ah..."

HSSB 285: Revealing His True Colours

When Yan Di and the Devil Saint Yuan Tian arrived in the foreign dimension above Broad Creed Mountain, the Broad Creed Grand Formation was instantly activated.

With Broad Creed Mountain's chief peak, the Heaven Rising Peak, as their centre, countless spirit patterns lit up in the surroundings of Broad Creed Mountain like long rainbows streaking through the heavens, coming together to form a massive, vast formation.

This formation expanded unceasingly outwards, stretching far off into the distance without end.

Right above the Heaven Rising Peak, the space shook as an almost completely transparent massive rectangular area of space unknown in dimensions, even more massive than the entire Broad Creed Mountains by hundreds and thousands of times, filled the air.

After appearing for a moment, this rectangular space completely became transparent once more, to the point of not being visible to the naked eye.

At the top of the Heaven Rising Peak, two old men gazed up at the sky together. With their cultivation bases, they were able to see what was happening within.

This two people were precisely the longtime Elders of Broad

Creed Mountain, the Grand Elder Zhang Kun, and the First Seat Elder of the Martial Repository, Xin Dongping.

Of the three Transcending Mortality Martial Grandmasters of Broad Creed Mountain other than Yuan Zhengfeng that the world knew of, other than the other Grand Elder, Elder He who was currently guarding Yuan Zhengfeng amidst his secluded cultivation, the other two were both here.

Elder Zhang gazed at the sky, muttering to himself, “It is indeed the Devil Saint Yuan Tian! Yan Di actually moved him from the outside world over to within the Clear Qi Grand Formation. Let’s first not talk about how he managed to do it; this is also much too risky. Bringing a Martial Saint enemy within the core grounds of our clan-that’s saying that neither of them will rest till the other is dead!”

Xin Dongping similarly looked at the sky, not speaking.

Yan Zhaoge and Yan Di being able to move the Devil Saint Yuan Tian back to Broad Creed Mountain was also completely out of his predictions.

Yan Di had returned to the Mountain much, much earlier than in his predictions.

However, while having returned, Yan Di had also brought the Devil Saint Yuan Tian back with him, still being engaged in battle with him, unable to split his attentions.

As he pondered, Xin Dongping tapped lightly with his feet, stimulating the Clear Qi Grand Formation that had created that foreign dimension.

An illusory scene instantly appeared before him and Elder Zhang. Within were scenes of within the foreign dimension.

Afterwards, the two shockedly discovered that wearing the Clear Qi Robe, his sabre-intent sweeping domineeringly, looking arrogantly over all lower lifeforms, Yan Di was actually suppressing the Martial Saint realm Yuan Tian!

At this moment, with the added advantage of the Clear Qi Grand Formation, Yan Di's power skyrocketed a step further!

While in order to guard against outside enemies, Yan Di did not completely unleash all the power of the grand formation, devoting more to stabilising the foreign dimension and trapping Yuan Tian within, even so, as the Heavenly Dragon Sabre within Yan Di's hands rampaged, Yuan Tian was continuously beat back in retreat.

An exalted Martial Saint, flustered beyond belief!

Ever since Yuan Tian had stepped into the Martial Saint realm, when had he been in as disadvantageous a situation as this?

Elder Zhang sucked in a deep breath, "If he is able to settle things and slay the Devil Saint, that dangerous existence, here within a short period of time, that might not be impossible."

Seeing this, Xin Dongping said after a while, “That’s right. Still, the shorter the time the better. The longer this drags on, the greater the possibility for sudden changes in the situation.”

His voice had yet to fall when Broad Creed Mountain beneath their feet suddenly seemed to shake.

Elder Zhang furrowed his snowy white brows as he looked in the direction of the Water Ridge Peak of the back mountains, “...it’s over at the Heaven Sealing Gorge?”

From the direction of the Water Ridge Peak resounded the quaking of the land and the shaking of mountains, causing the entire Broad Creed Mountain to seem to shake along with it.

“With junior apprentice-brother Gong sitting over the Heaven Sealing Gorge, how did something suddenly occur there?” Elder Zhang stared at the Water Ridge Peak.

Beside him, Xin Dongping’s gaze was calm, “Whatever the reason, it has to be resolved as soon as possible.”

“Fang Zhun’s whereabouts are uncertain, with no one knowing exactly what he has gone to do,” Xin Dongping said, “Although it is not good to make a conclusion now, we should still be mentally prepared for some things.”

He looked at Elder Zhang, “Junior apprentice-brother Gong

included, none of the others is a match for Fang Zhun. One of us should go over to take a look, the other remaining here and helping Yan Di to hold the formation.”

Elder Zhang looked at Xin Dongping seriously. Xin Dongping’s gaze was quiet and without fluctuations, still as water, with no changes visible within whatsoever, like how it was usually.

Due to the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss, of Broad Creed Mountain’s peak experts, the old Chief Yuan Zhengfeng aside, the most worrisome ones were Xin Dongping and Fang Zhun.

Elder Zhang and Xin Dongping had been fellow disciples for many years. While he was reluctant to suspect this senior apprentice-brother of his, he could not help but be wary of him somewhat.

Seeing Xin Dongping let him make the choice himself, making him seem innocuous, after pondering for a moment, Elder Zhang promptly decided, “I will trouble senior apprentice-brother Xin to sit over this area; I will go and take a look at that side.”

After all, it was still Fang Zhun who was still the most suspicious now. With the matter being so urgent and the available personnel being limited, Elder Zhang still decided to trust in Xin Dongping.

Still, he remained guarded against him somewhat.

Allowing Xin Dongping to move as he liked, with no one to restrict him, other things aside, if Xin Dongping really was problematic, if he arrived at the back mountains and snuck over to where Yuan Zhengfeng was currently in seclusion, it would be hard for Elder He, guarding over the area, to defend against him herself.

Leaving Xin Dongping here, while it seemed like he was looking over the entire situation, as long as the control of the Clear Qi Grand Formation remained in Yan Di's hands, he would not be able to prove much of a hindrance.

After he went to the back mountains, if Xin Dongping went there and caused trouble, he would also be able to join hands with Elder He in a bid to stop him.

Xin Dongping seemed not to think anything of this as nodded upon hearing his words, "Alright, go speedily then."

Looking at Elder Zhang's departing figure, Xin Dongping's expression was mild as he swivelled his head to look at the sky once more.

He then lowered his head to look at Broad Creed Mountain under him, his gaze fluctuating slightly.

After a while, he shook his head, not able to hold back the smile that appeared on his face as his gaze turned to the direction of Water Ridge Peak.

There, a sword-intent that surged to the heavens suddenly appeared, and at the same time also a powerful fist-intent that seemed able to overturn the very heavens. The two met in a heaven-shocking, earth-shaking collision.

Seeing this, Xin Dongping nodded slightly, no longer lingering as he took to the air, stepping higher and higher into the sky.

As he walked, he reached out and drew numerous spirit patterns within the air.

Countless spirit patterns were etched within the air, glowing with a brilliant light, gradually forming a spirit formation which exuded a shocking concept and aura.

The spirit formation formed of these countless spirit patterns gradually merged into the Clear Qi Grand Formation guarding Broad Creed Mountain.

The core region of the Clear Qi Grand Formation instantly began to distort.

Looking silently at this scene, Xin Dongping's figure suddenly shook, his acupoints pulsing as his true essence transformed into countless spirit talismans, flying into the air one after another.

These spirit talismans formed numerous spirit arrays which then combined, transforming into an existence that seemed like a tall tower whilst also an altar, enveloping Xin Dongping's entire body.

Finally, light flickered at the top of that altar, a tall giant appearing, rooted to the earth and soaring into the heavens!

As Xin Dongping extended his hands, that massive giant performed the same motion, also extending its hands, then spreading them apart mightily!

The Clear Qi Grand Formation shook, a door appearing within.

Within the sky, that massive, transparent rectangle appeared once more.

A passageway to the foreign dimension, opened for Xin Dongping!

It was not Yan Di who had opened the door for Xin Dongping, wanting him to enter and assist him. Rather, it was Xin Dongping who had opened the passageway himself.

Xin Dongping entered with great strides, unceasingly drawing countless spirit patterns as he progressed, guiding the power of formations to bolster himself.

Other than his own formations, even the power of Broad Creed Mountain's Clear Qi Grand Formation was unceasingly being drawn by him!

Within the foreign dimension, hacking Yuan Tian into retreat, Yan Di swivelled his head to look at Xin Dongping.

Yan Di could clearly feel the other party currently gradually stripping control of the Clear Qi Grand Formation away from him!

Xin Dongping said mildly, “Having passed so many bitter years in painstaking preparation within the Martial Repository, I did attain some results.”

HSSB 286: Amongst Martial Grandmasters, I'm Invincible

Yan Di knit his brows slightly, feeling the changes in the Clear Qi Grand Formation as he could feel that his control over it was currently shifting over to Xin Dongping.

Looking at Yan Di, Xin Dongping's expression contained a bit of mockery, "This old man has always been waiting for Yuan Zhengfeng to enter secluded cultivation to attempt a breakthrough into the Martial Saint realm. Today, I've finally successfully waited it out."

"Yan Di, did you know? Not just Yuan Zhengfeng, from the very moment you entered our clan, this old man similarly noticed your remarkability, and these years that've passed have proved the discernment of the two of us to be right."

"It's just that today, this old man has discovered that I still underestimated you before."

Xin Dongping said, "It is precisely because of your presence that Yuan Zhengfeng felt at ease, daring to attempt his breakthrough into the Martial Saint realm. He knew that even if he failed and perished in the process, Broad Creed Mountain would still have a successor."

"But it was precisely like this that with Yuan Zhengfeng entering seclusion, the chance this old man had been waiting for finally came."

He extended both hands, his palms both carrying profound, complicated runes. As they flickered with radiance, they led the power of the Clear Qi Grand Formation to unceasingly boost his strength in an endless stream.

Xin Dongping's aura rose by the second.

"You've come late," Yuan Tian flicked the long whip within his hands, transforming into a massive heaven-shaking dragon that traversed the space within the foreign dimension, attacking towards Yan Di.

Xin Dongping said, "Relax, Devil Saint; stability is more important than speed. The objects and matters I promised you will all be fulfilled; you can rest at ease."

As Yan Di brandished his sabre to sweep away Yuan Tian's whip, his gaze focused on Xin Dongping, "Senior apprentice-uncle, Xin, the clan's spy is you? That rumoured Decimating Abyss's Lord, is also you?"

His eyes both lit up with a simple yet profound rune, his pupils shining brightly.

The Clear Qi Grand Formation distorted intensely. Tugged by two wills, it seemed like it might be ripped apart at any moment.

Yan Di and Xin Dongping began an intense contest over the

control of the Clear Qi Grand Formation.

Meanwhile, the Devil Saint Yuan Tian also recovered from his earlier weakness, attacking towards Yan Di mightily.

For Yuan Tian, facing Yan Di's Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre head-on was a rather unwise decision.

However, at this moment, the battle over the control of the Clear Qi Grand Formation would very possibly prove decisive in this overall battle situation.

Even if he lost out somewhat doing this, Yuan Tian also had to first help Xin Dongping to wrest control over the grand formation.

While he was bolstered by the Clear Qi Robe, battling Yuan Tian whilst also wresting for control over the grand formation with Xin Dongping, Yan Di instantly lost the upper hand, as the situation descended into a stalemate.

Xin Dongping was not in a hurry, only calming his mind to communicate with the formation as he said neither urgently nor slowly, "If this old man says that he is not the Abyss Lord, would you believe it, Yan Di? Fang Zhun-do you think he is one of this old man's accomplices?"

For Yan Di, losing the support of the grand formation, as time dragged on, the situation might gradually grow disadvantageous for him.

However, Yan Di remained calm, his expression not changing, “Seeing you, I know that there is nothing wrong with second apprentice-brother.”

“Did you pick up what second apprentice-brother left behind that year, finally walking on the road that you are on now?”

Xin Dongping clicked his tongue in admiration, “I must admit that you, Shi Tie and Fang Zhun are indeed worthy of the name of the Broad Creed Three Heroes. The only thing this old man has admitted Yuan Zhengfeng’s superiority in is his ability in accepting disciples.”

“Shi Tie is the foundation stone, while you and Fang Zhun are the pillars. You are also very possibly the roof that decides the final height of the structure.”

“While Fang Zhun is inferior to you in terms of strength and talent, he is also a rare genius, courageous and careful in his thoughts, daring to think and daring to act.”

“Everyone gazed at the Nine Underworlds and Hell but stopped their steps, reluctant to proceed, but he alone dared to enter down into its depths, touching and investigating a domain forbidden in the eyes of others.”

Xin Dongping sighed, “More important is that his investigations saw actual results. Many of this old man’s discoveries today are based upon his earlier research.”

Yan Di struck out with his sabre, hacking the sky and splitting the earth, extinguishing the dark clouds formed of Yuan Tian's true essence.

He said mildly, "What is more worthy of admiration about second apprentice-brother is his firm will, daring to doubt himself, able to pull back his horse before the cliff and stand by his bottom line, knowing what can be courageously done, and what cannot be done no matter what."

Xin Dongping said leisurely, "However, this doesn't change the truth. From a certain perspective, it is actually him who is the true creator of the Decimating Abyss."

"Why is the encroachment of the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss on our clan the most serious? It is because the Decimating Abyss originated here."

Xin Dongping lowered his head, his gaze seemingly penetrating through space to fall on Broad Creed Mountain below them as he sighed emotionally, "My greatest wish was once to become the owner of this place. Thinking about it now, it is no longer important to me. With the descent of the Decimating Abyss, this old man can gain much more. Why not let this place be destroyed?"

He raised his head to look at Yan Di once more, suddenly breaking out in a smile, "If this old man does not succeed today, the news that the Decimating Abyss's Lord is of Broad Creed

Mountain and that the Decimating Abyss originated from Broad Creed Mountain will also spread throughout the world.”

“When the Sacred Sun Clan’s Huang Guanglie emerges from seclusion, I believe that he will be very happy to hear this news; I think that it would become the best reason for him making a move on Broad Creed Mountain.

Xin Dongping had prepared for many years, his understanding of the Clear Qi Grand Formation even deeper than Yan Di’s. Making a move at this moment, more than half of the control of the Clear Qi Grand Formation instantly fell under his grasp.

Seeing that the situation with the grand formation had already fallen under his control, Xin Dongping domineeringly made his move!

An ethereal sword-light that seemed heavy chopped out towards Yan Di, the sword-light half clear, half turbid, as though the heavens and earth had become one!

Yan Di’s eyes emitted a cold light.

He abruptly spread out his arms, temporarily removing the Clear Qi Robe from his body!

As the Clear Qi Robe trembled, it suddenly transformed into a vast screen of light that covered the heavens, imprisoning the Devil Saint Yuan Tian within a single area.

This could only be sustained for a short time, but to Yan Di, it was already enough.

Innumerable spirit talismans swirled around him, resembling the formation of a heavenly altar, vast and majestic, as though presiding over the nine heavens.

Yan Di's voice resounded from the heavenly altar, "If Huang Guanglie wants to come, he does not need an excuse. Our clan being too weak to withstand him is the only reason he needs."

"To those of the Eight Extremities World other than the Sacred Sun Clan and the Heavenly Thunder Hall, slaying you and the Devil Saint here will account for it sufficiently!"

Infinite light flickered at this moment, a massive figure gradually rising from Yan Di's heavenly altar!

Earlier, still having felt that Yan Di's was speaking over his head, Xin Dongping and Yuan Tian both had their pupils dilate abruptly, "Merging essence, forming avatar-you are currently stepping into Transcending Mortality?!"

Yan Di did not answer. Only the giant on the heavenly altar extended its palm, the Heavenly Dragon Sabre also expanding madly in size, transforming into a true massive heaven-splitting sabre, landing within its palm.

The giant brandished his sabre, clashing intensely with Xin Dongping's Limitless Heavenly Sword!

Yuan Tian was temporarily trapped by the Clear Qi Robe, unable to extricate himself. He saw Yan Di stride out, instantly arriving before Xin Dongping!

“When I was in the late Essence Talisman stage, under the Martial Saint realm, there were two people I was not completely confident of being able to beat, and one of them was you, Xin Dongping,” Yan Di's frame merged with his Immeasurable Heavenly Avatar, instantly coming before Xin Dongping's Limitless Heavenly Avatar, “But now...”

Stepping into the Transcending Mortality stage, his control over the Clear Qi Grand Formation also increased, as Xin Dongping instantly felt his wresting of control over the grand formation being contained.

The old man's face was sunken as water as the Limitless Heavenly Avatar formed of his true martial intent gained a sword within its palm, a sword-light that resembled a heavenly pillar meeting Yan Di's blow.

Now, he more or less still held an advantage in terms of control over the Clear Qi Grand Formation.

However, in a clash of swords and sabres, he and the Limitless Heavenly Avatar were shockingly sent into retreat!

The massive giant of light's sword-wielding right arm was directly shattered!

“With Master yet to leave seclusion a Martial Saint, it might be a bit disrespectful for me to say this...” Yan Di's voice resounded within the air, “Entering Transcending Mortality, amongst Martial Grandmasters, I'm invincible.”

HSSB 287: All Stay Behind For Me

Yan Di's domineering sabre left Xin Dongping hard pressed to advance a single step!

Over on the other side, with a long howl, the Martial Saint Yuan Tian wanted to break free of the Clear Qi Robe.

However, Yan Di was faster than him. After his Immeasurable Heavenly Avatar suppressed Xin Dongping's Limitless Heavenly Avatar, he struck out towards Xin Dongping himself with his palm!

Xin Dongping's brows were knit tightly, but he could only raise his hands to meet the attack.

Broad Creed Mountain's two peak experts met head-on with the same Tushita Palm in mid-air, as boundless purplish-red Tushita flames filled the foreign dimension.

Xin Dongping stumbled backwards in retreat, the profound runes on his palms instantly dimming!

With a long roar, the runes within Yan Di's pupils grew even more dazzling.

The control over the grand formation that guarded over Broad Creed Mountain, the Clear Qi Grand Formation, was instantly greatly wrested back by Yan Di!

Having sent one of the two greatest experts of Broad Creed Mountain's previous generation into continuous retreat, Yan Di did not lose his cool, advancing rashly.

Over on the other side, having temporarily left his body, the Clear Qi Robe could only trap Yuan Tian for a time. From the looks of it, Yuan Tian was about to break free and suppress the Clear Qi Robe instead.

After restricting Xin Dongping's control over the Clear Qi Grand Formation, Yan Di immediately retreated, sending Yuan Tian into retreat with a sabre.

He spread out his arms once more, the light screen formed of the Clear Qi Robe transforming back into the form of a robe once more, enveloping his body.

At this moment, bolstered by the Clear Qi Robe, Yan Di's sabre-intent grew more majestic and domineering, presiding over all.

The power of the Clear Qi Grand Formation bolstered his body in an endless stream.

At this moment, Xin Dongping and Yuan Tian could only feel as though the opponent before them was a true Martial Saint, wielding a Sacred Artifact.

Yuan Tian's pupils dilated slightly. Watching Yan Di's clash with Xin Dongping, he vaguely felt that even without the Clear Qi Robe

and the Clear Qi Grand Formation, after stepping into the Transcending Mortality stage, Yan Di could still make things hard for him, a Martial Saint.

Not mentioning the victor, at the very least, he was not confident of being able to slay him.

And now, bolstered by the Clear Qi Robe, also having wrested back a great part of the Clear Qi Grand Formation's power, his aura surged to the heavens, greatly holding the upper hand as he fought one against two, leaving the two great experts, Yuan Tian and Xin Dongping, unable to raise their heads!

Not having entered the Martial Saint realm, Xin Dongping could only survive with great difficulty!

Seeing this, Yuan Tian even involuntarily had the idea of retreating rise within his mind.

Some things, he wanted; but however important they were, he still needed his life to be able to enjoy them.

While he was not willing to admit it, Yuan Tian discovered that if the situation progressed like this, he actually truly had the possibility of falling here in Broad Creed Mountain.

Falling under the sabre of a Martial Grandmaster opponent!

But however much he wanted to retreat at this moment, Yan Di

was also determined for him to stay behind in Broad Creed Mountain forever.

The foreign dimension formed by the Clear Qi Grand Formation completely lit up with dazzling spirit patterns between the heavens and the earth, resembling a cage as it completely locked down the area, not allowing Yuan Tian and Xin Dongping to leave.

Yuan Tian wanted to break through, but Yan Di's domineering-intent that hacked the heavens and split the earth surged madly, forcing him to have to first focus on the situation before him.

Xin Dongping's face was sunken as water. Compared to Yuan Tian, his situation was even more dangerous.

Whilst holding on with great difficulty against Yan Di's attacks, he tried to communicate with the Clear Qi Grand Formation once more, wresting over control of it.

However, at this moment, stably holding the upper hand, Yan Di's attacks were like an endless tide, leaving Xin Dongping hard pressed to proceed.

The space within the foreign dimension saw battle to the point of the heavens and earth changing in colour.

On the great earth down below, at Broad Creed Mountain, clouds surged and gales howled.

Accompanied by Xin Dongping entering the foreign dimension and wresting control over the grand formation, in the surroundings of Broad Creed Mountain, the hidden undercurrents lying in wait simultaneously erupted madly.

Internal conflict arose, with some Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners suddenly discovering to their great shock their companions beside them suddenly viciously looking to claim their lives, wanting to deal them fatal blows on their vitals.

After many internal investigations and cleansings of Broad Creed Mountain, most of the Decimating Abyss martial practitioners concealed within had been disposed with. However, there were still those who had slipped through the net, suddenly making a move at this moment.

At the same time that the internal chaos erupted, outside enemies also quietly entered.

Guided by Xin Dongping and his men, a considerable amount of Decimating Abyss martial practitioners had been lying in wait in the vicinity of Broad Creed Mountain. Now, they launched their assault.

At their lead, were mostly remnants of Black Nightmare Mountain!

Even many Black Nightmare Mountain martial practitioners who had not joined the Decimating Abyss were participating this time.

They had been waiting for this day for a long time.

While Broad Creed Mountain currently lacked manpower, with traitors causing trouble internally, led by Fu Enshu and its other peak experts, they still came out to meet the invading enemy in an orderly fashion.

Back mountains, beneath Water Ridge Peak, outside the Heaven Sealing Gorge.

Elder Zhang's face was livid as he looked at the majestic sword-intent before him.

This sword-intent, usually hidden and not exerted, had actually merged with the Clear Qi Grand Formation. In doing so, the Heaven Sealing Gorge had actually instead been sealed here, its connection with the outside world broken off.

Elder Zhang could tell that this was the work of Xin Dongping, his longtime fellow disciple at the clan.

The force of the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm unleashed at its maximum, Elder Zhang forcibly broke through the sword-intent that was sealing off this space.

With the sword-intent seal damaged, Elder Zhang could feel that there were currently people clashing within!

Detecting his arrival, one of the two sides of combatants fled in

another direction.

Elder Zhang was also extremely familiar with his aura and fist-intent, as his face grew ugly, “...senior apprentice-brother Wang!”

That leading late Essence Talisman Martial Grandmaster was clearly the Elder Wang who had been imprisoned in the Heaven Sealing Gorge, the devilish intent birthed within his heart having been exposed!

Other than that, there were also many major criminals imprisoned within the Heaven Sealing Gorge who had escaped.

Elder Zhang’s face was ugly as he wanted to chase, but he very quickly detected that the terrifying aura of the Nine Underworlds had actually appeared here in the Heaven Sealing Gorge.

A great amount of devilish qi was dispersed over the area, causing the originally already gloomy, terrifying Heaven Sealing Gorge to resemble a domain of ghosts.

A Devilish Domain Grand Formation had already taken form.

Within the grand formation, two people still remained, the other side of combatants from just now.

Looking over, Elder Zhang saw that they were precisely Fang Zhun and the First Seat of the Heaven Sealing Gorge, Elder Gong.

Elder Gong looked beat up as he was clearly injured.

Fang Zhun's expression was calm as he suppressed the Devilish Domain Grand Formation, preventing the descent of the Nine Underworlds.

“Xin Dongping is a traitor!” Elder Gong hissed,” He suddenly attacked the Heaven Sealing Gorge, trying to tempt us to join the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss. Luckily, Fang Zhun arrived. Otherwise, I would already have been killed by him.”

Fang Zhun looked at Elder Zhang, “Senior apprentice-uncle Zhang, senior apprentice-uncle Xin did not remain behind to deal with us, instead handing things over to senior apprentice-uncle Wang's group. He only sealed the mountain with his sword-intent as concealment and hurriedly left. He should have a greater scheme.”

“From his sword-intent merging with our clan's Clear Qi Grand Formation, senior apprentice-uncle Xin's familiarity with the Clear Qi Grand Formation clearly far surpasses what we previously thought. He will very possibly attempt to wrest control over the Grand Formation, in this way gaining the ability to stand against junior apprentice-brother Yan and the Clear Qi Robe!”

Elder Zhang nodded, “That's right.”

His palm descended, assisting Fang Zhun and Elder Gong.

Fang Zhun said, "I will suppress the Devilish Domain Grand Formation. Senior apprentice-uncle Zhang, you should look for senior apprentice-uncle Xin. The Clear Qi Robe and the Clear Qi Grand Formation are our basis."

Elder Gong said hatefully, "This old man will pursue senior apprentice-brother Wang and the others, preventing them from creating trouble on the mountain."

With time so pressing, glancing at Fang Zhun, Elder Zhang promptly said, "I'll leave it to you."

Saying thus, he rushed out of the back mountains alongside Elder Gong.

At this moment, Decimating Abyss martial practitioners were already assaulting their way up the mountain, amongst them even late Essence Talisman Martial Grandmasters, their destructive power shocking.

With a furious roar, Elder Zhang manifested his martial avatar, the massive Broad Creed Heavenly Avatar shocking the area, instantly suppressing the momentum of the Decimating Abyss martial practitioners.

Within the foreign dimension, Yan Di fought a like a god of war.

On Broad Creed Mountain, the martial practitioners also turned

from defence into attack.

In the back mountains, Fang Zhun suppressed the Devilish Domain Grand Formation.

At this time, Broad Creed Mountain seemed to be in the midst of overcoming and surpassing its great tribulation.

However, at this time, the hidden undercurrents in other places began to surge!

In the Fire Domain, in the land ruled by the Sacred Sun Clan, numerous experts were currently gathered!

HSSB 288: The Sacred Sun Clan Moves

With a great battle erupting in Broad Creed Mountain, with even devilish qi surging to the heavens, the chaotic situation very quickly drew the attention of various parties.

Experts of Broad Creed Mountain outside of the Central Heaven Region wanted to reinforce their clan, but the situation in the outside world also grew tense at this moment.

The massive pressure forced them to be unable to leave and reinforce Broad Creed Mountain.

Especially in the South Heaven Region that directly faced the Fire Domain.

At the border between the Fire and Heaven Domains, a great amount of peak Sacred Sun Clan experts appeared. While they didn't step onto the territory of the Heaven Domain, a tense atmosphere pervaded the air.

With the Grand Elder of the Sacred Sun Clan, Pan Botai, and the head of the Seven Reigning Suns, the World Illuminating Lord at their head, a group of Sacred Sun Clan experts arrived, watching the Heaven Domain hungrily like a tiger would its prey.

Pan Botai asked coldly, "When will senior apprentice-brother Huang be emerging from seclusion?"

The World Illuminating Lord said, “Very soon; probably in the next one or two days.”

Pan Botai nodded, gazing in the direction of Broad Creed Mountain, “Actually, we can already make our move now.”

The face of the World Illuminating Lord was calm, “Do not be in such a hurry, senior apprentice-uncle Pan. Making a move now, we have insufficient confidence of completely wiping out Broad Creed Mountain and the Decimating Abyss in one fell swoop. If the Nine Underworlds descend, it will be similarly hard for our Sacred Sun Clan to handle. Turbid Wave Pavilion may voice a complaint, and even the Painting Saint Old Man Mo may be alerted.”

“Also, if we directly make a move, we will be obstructed by Jade Sea City and Infinite Boundless Mountain. We should wait a bit; the situation in the East Sea has begun to grow unstable. Waiting for Turbid Wave Pavilion and Jade Sea City to be drawn by the Flame Devils, we can then move in for the kill.”

“At that time, Broad Creed Mountain and the Decimating Abyss should both be badly wounded.”

The World Illuminating Lord said, “With Yuan Zhengfeng in seclusion, this will not be easy for Broad Creed Mountain to tide through.”

While Pan Botai’s expression was cold, his gaze also containing rage and hatred, his tone remained calm, “The Decimating Abyss has had major movements, with even the Devil Saint Yuan Tian

involved. However, with Broad Creed Mountain's long history, it is not something that can be taken down so easily. If Yuan Tian wants to do something, he first has to deal with the Clear Qi Robe."

"With us not moving, unless the Decimating Abyss has a way to deal with Broad Creed Mountain's Clear Qi Grand Formation, Broad Creed Mountain will most likely be able to tide through this tribulation."

Hearing Pan Botai's words, the World Illuminating Lord suddenly laughed, "Regarding Broad Creed Mountain's Clear Qi Grand Formation, our Sacred Sun Clan has also prepared something for it."

"While we are awaiting battle here, moving according to the situation, opportunities still rely on us to seek them, and need not always be waited out."

His gaze was leisurely as he turned. There stood a formation, currently circulating quietly.

Pan Botai's gaze similarly fell on that formation, "Not directly attacking, just relying on this formation, Broad Creed Mountain's Clear Qi Grand Formation cannot be shaken just like that."

The World Illuminating Lord walked towards the formation, stepping within it, "It is naturally not just that."

He flipped his palm, light flickering as a bow of pure gold, with

flowing fire roiling above it, appeared within his hands.

It was precisely the Sacred Sun Clan's famed high-grade spirit artifact, the Sun Shooter.

The World Illuminating Lord pulled the bowstring, then took out an item.

It was not an arrow, rather being something like a pill, giving off an extremely strange feeling.

Illuminated by the light of the Sun Shooter, it seemed very small and inconsequential, resembling a black dot on the sun's surface. However, observing it carefully, it also felt extremely heavy, seemingly containing power even greater than that within the Sun Shooter.

Seeing this, Pan Botai raised his white brows, "Anti-Sun? Aren't these already extinct; the last time one appeared was a full six hundred years ago."

The World Illuminating Lord laughed, "Otherwise, why would I say that opportunities have to be sought on our own."

Saying thus, he placed that tiny black pill on the bowstring of Shooting Sun, stretching it back!

It aimed not towards the Heaven Domain, but at the formation at his feet.

Sunlight shone on the body of the World Illuminating Lord, eight golden suns arising, flickering with light, emanating infinite heat.

Countless spirit talismans surged into existence around him before transforming into numerous spirit arrays, finally stacking together to form an existence that seemed like a tall tower whilst also an altar, enveloping him within.

Merging his true martial intent with the high-grade spirit artifact, the Sun Shooter, the World Illuminating Lord then added that power to that tiny black pill.

The black pill, named Anti-Sun, did not emit light, its lustre growing dimmer and dimmer, its power also getting heavier and heavier.

The World Illuminating Lord abruptly released the bowstring, the Anti-Sun transforming into a streak of dark light, directly piercing through the ground at his feet, entering the formation before it vanished completely.

For just that one moment, the formation beneath the World Illuminating Lord's feet circulated mightily, emanating an unprecedented fearsome, violent feel.

The next moment, the formation regained its previous casualness, as though everything earlier had been but a hallucinatory mirage.

However, satisfied smiles were visible on the faces of the World Illuminating Lord and Pan Botai, smiling coldly as they looked in the direction of Broad Creed Mountain and the Heaven Domain.

At the same time, at the headquarters of the Sacred Sun Clan, the World Illuminating Peak.

The current Chief of the Sacred Sun Clan, Huang Xu, was seated in the meditative position at the top of the mountain, a long golden ruler by his knee, nine golden sun patterns visible on the long ruler, seemingly blazing.

Behind Huang Xu stood a single person, the Twilight Lord of the Seven Reigning Suns.

It was just that the Twilight Lord's face was currently dim and dispirited.

“Speaking of it, pushing things onto Old Man Chen of Jade Sea City was not a bad result, but while you were able to deceive the outside world, you were not able to deceive our Sacred Sun Clan,” Huang Xu said mildly, “Because he fell to the dark side, Dawn did not leave behind a corpse. Therefore, others could believe when you said you slew him.”

“Sadly for you, you were unlucky. Someone saw that it was Jade Sea City's Old Man Chen who killed Dawn.”

“However, the final result was that Old Man Chen vanished and bore the suspicion of being an operative of the Decimating Abyss, while you reported that you killed Dawn.”

Huang Xu did not turn to look at him, only saying mildly, “What do you think that I would feel after hearing this news?”

While Huang Xu did not move at all, the long golden ruler by his knee revealed vast power as it suppressed the Twilight Lord to the point of not daring to make any rash movements.

The Twilight Lord was silent for a moment before he said, “I arrived just a step too late, unable to prevent Old Man Chen from killing Dawn. However, there shouldn’t have been anyone else there at the time, or I would have discovered him, unless it was an expert at the same level as or even stronger than me.”

Huang Xu said mildly, “Sometimes, one does not necessarily have to be in the vicinity to see what is happening.”

The Twilight Lord said in an indifferent tone, “Then I have nothing good to say.”

Huang Xu said, “Honestly speaking, you have always been my right hand man. I originally trusted in you a lot, always suspecting that the target of the Decimating Abyss’s encroachment was World Illuminating.”

The Twilight Lord laughed tragically, “Saying all of this is also

pointless now.”

“That’s also true,” A hint of a smile suddenly appeared on Huang Xu’s face, “You said just now that while you are not sure of who specifically the Decimating Abyss’s Lord is, you can be sure that he is someone of Broad Creed Mountain?”

The Twilight Lord broke out laughing, “That’s right, it is precisely so. I have no need to deceive you; the battle of Broad Creed Mountain should already be in its most critical stage, and the Abyss Lord will definitely move personally. There is already no way to conceal his identity any longer, and also no need for such.”

“To you, this should be extremely good news, isn’t it?”

On the World Illuminating Peak, within a stone chamber, the World Illuminating Young Master Huang Jie held an orb within his hands.

Within the orb appeared the scenes of the conversation between Huang Jie and the Twilight Lord.

Huang Jie’s expression was calm as he nodded, “Indeed, it’s extremely good news.”

HSSB 289: Vanquishing Evil For The Eight Extremities World

Huang Jie kept the orb, exiting the stone chamber. He gazed into the distance, in the direction of the Heaven Domain.

After a moment, a figure pushed the door and entered, coming before Huang Jie. That person was precisely Tang Yonghao.

“Junior apprentice-brother Huang, does our Sacred Sun Clan intend to attack Broad Creed Mountain now?” Tang Yonghao’s expression was solemn as he looked earnestly at Huang Jie.

Huang Jie seemed not to find Tang Yonghao’s arrival unexpected as he said calmly, “The Sacred Sun Clan intends not to attack Broad Creed Mountain, but to vanquish the evils plaguing the Eight Extremities World.”

Looking at Huang Jie, Tang Yonghao furrowed his brows.

Huang Jie’s expression was mild, “Broad Creed Mountain is in collusion with the Decimating Abyss; there are signs that it was precisely there that the Decimating Abyss originated, guiding the path for the Nine Underworlds.”

“The Nine Underworld Evil Devils are like the Flame Devils of the Flame Devil World, they are enemies of the Eight Extremities World.”

“As the number one Sacred Ground of the Eight Extremities World, our Sacred Sun Clan is duty-bound to prevent the Nine Underworlds from descending-isn’t that so?”

Tang Yonghao said with a serious look, “I know of the tensions between Broad Creed Mountain and our Sacred Sun Clan; they were not accumulated within a short time.”

“If it truly is a battle between our two Sacred Grounds, an internal conflict of the Eight Extremities World’s human martial practitioners, as a descendant of the Sacred Sun Clan, I, Tang Yonghao, would definitely stand on the frontlines in fighting it out with those of Broad Creed Mountain, with no hesitation at all.”

“However, you also said that the Nine Underworlds is the common enemy of the Eight Extremities World. Whatever tensions there are between our Sacred Sun Clan and Broad Creed Mountain, they should only be decided after the Nine Underworlds and the Decimating Abyss have been dealt with.”

“The Decimating Abyss has operatives in all the clans and Sacred Grounds. The great battle that has erupted in Broad Creed Mountain now is clearly a battle between them and the Decimating Abyss.”

Tang Yonghao’s gaze was fixated on Huang Jie, “It is fine if we sit on the mountain and watch the tigers fight-could it be that we are even going to help the Decimating Abyss out?”

Huang Jie’s gaze was clear as water, “Senior apprentice-brother

Tang, I already said that our Sacred Sun Clan's target is precisely eliminating those who may guide the Nine Underworlds to descend."

"Broad Creed Mountain is precisely where the Decimating Abyss originated."

Huang Jie said in a slow, calm tone, "The great battle now-who knows if it is not a method to pull the wool over our eyes?"

Hearing his words, Tang Yonghao's pupils dilated slightly.

Huang Jie continued, "If one really speaks of Broad Creed Mountain's peak experts, who would most easily fall to the Nine Underworlds? It is actually precisely their Chief, the most exalted in position, Yuan Zhengfeng."

"This old senior Yuan experienced the flourishing times of Zhan Dongge, and also the dormant times of Zhan Xilou. Standing from the perspective of a descendant of Broad Creed Mountain, he bears the heavy responsibility of leading the clan to rise up once more, yet also bears the terrifying pressure brought to him by my grandfather and our Sacred Sun Clan."

"Zhan Xilou is already dead, but Yuan Zhengfeng has old injuries holding him back, no hope of stepping into the Martial Saint realm, his longevity reduced, growing older and older by the day, the road ahead lustreless, the pressure on him mounting."

Huang Jie said calmly, “Even if he does not fear death, the pressure of supporting the clan also weighs down upon him at every single moment...”

Tang Yonghao suddenly interrupted Huang Jie, “Junior apprentice-brother Huang, do you take me for a fool?”

Such rude behaviour with fellow disciples had virtually never happened with Tang Yonghao before.

However, his gaze that was on Huang Jie now was stern, “Everyone knows full well what exactly is going on-why do you use such words to ridicule me?”

Huang Jie remained silent as he looked quietly at Tang Yonghao.

Tang Yonghao was focused on Huang Jie, “Junior apprentice-brother Huang, you are a great talent, and I have always admired you. Outsiders do not know of your ability, but I still more or less know about it somewhat.”

“You do not just have knowledge of the plans of the clan’s higher echelons; you also possess the power to speak up and make proposals.”

“You are also a participant in the matter this time.”

“Broad Creed Mountain is currently standing against the Decimating Abyss, but you are preparing to stab a knife into their

backs. Perhaps you think that this is the most beneficial to our Sacred Sun Clan, allowing us to net Broad Creed Mountain and the Decimating Abyss in one fell swoop, while my thoughts are pedantic and foolish.”

“Okay, let’s first not talk about morals and whatnot; I am of no mind to force others to think the same as me. I’ll only ask you one thing-are you confident that you can control the entire situation? If this leads to the descent of the Nine Underworlds, what then?”

Tang Yonghao said seriously, “Perhaps where the Nine Underworlds descend will be the Heaven Domain, but that is still part of the Eight Extremities World, just like how the passageway to the Flame Devil World is at the East Sea, but all of us face the threat of the Flame Devils together.”

Looking at Tang Yonghao, Huang Jie suddenly smiled, “Senior apprentice-brother Tang, honestly speaking, sometimes, I do feel that you are rather a fool.”

Tang Yonghao looked at Huang Jie, not angered.

Huang Jie continued, “However, this time has nothing to do with foolishness; it’s that there are some things that you do not know.”

Tang Yonghao said coldly, “Let me hear them.”

“The current era, the current situation, is not like with Broad Creed Mountain’s Zhan Dongge and Zhan Xilou that year,” Huang

Jie raised his head, gazing into the sky as he said leisurely, “The current hardship before us now, is a test.”

Tang Yonghao was stunned, “What are you saying?”

Huang Jie smiled, no longer elaborating, only saying, “Broad Creed Mountain is in cahoots with the Decimating Abyss in guiding the descent of the Nine Underworlds. We are diligently working to eliminate them and save the Eight Extremities World—it’s as simple as that.”

Saying thus, he turned and went back into his stone chamber.

Looking at his disappearing figure, Tang Yonghao’s gaze was incomparably complicated.

Returning within his stone chamber, Huang Jie saw a middle-aged man already seated within as he went forward and greeted him casually, “When did senior apprentice-uncle arrive?”

The middle-aged man, the Sunset Lord of the Seven Reigning Suns, nodded to Huang Jie, “At around the same time as Yonghao.”

The Sunset Lord gazed towards the door, “Yonghao has too straightforward a nature. If he does not change, he can only be a sword, and not someone who wields the sword.”

“It is due to the environment and the global situation,” Huang

Jie said calmly, “Senior apprentice-brother Tang has value in his existence.”

“If our Sacred Sun Clan wants to progress domineeringly forward, senior apprentice-brother Tang would appear unsuited for the times, pedantic and foolish, but if we suffered a massive setback and fell to the very bottom, someone like him would instead serve an effect, preserving the final bit of vitality for our Sacred Sun Clan.”

The Sunset Lord said, “That’s not wrong, but that’s a thing that is impossible to happen. Yonghao is destined to only remain a clear orb obscured by dust.”

Huang Jie’s expression was mild, “This is only natural.”

The Sunset Lord rose, “I am heading over to where senior apprentice-uncle Pan and them are. Everything only awaits the old Chief leaving seclusion before things are settled; don’t you intend to go along as well, personally witnessing the unfolding of events?”

“Heading there personally would only be in case of accidents, allowing me to adjust the plan at any moment,” Huang Jie shook his head, “I have already finished all that I have to do, and I do not have the interest to see my own plans come to fruition. To me, that satisfaction does not hold much meaning, as long as that the final result does not diverge from what is predicted.”

The Sunset Lord also did not force him, “I, however, will head there and witness it personally.”

Huang Jie smiled, “Well, senior apprentice-uncle, being able to destroy Broad Creed Mountain that would guide the Nine Underworlds to descend within the Eight Extremities World is indeed a cause for celebration.”

The Sunset Lord laughed greatly as he exited, “That’s right, it is precisely so. Broad Creed Mountain brought this upon themselves- and thus our Sacred Sun Clan will vanquish evil for the Eight Extremities World!”

HSSB 290: The Heavenly Thunder Hall Also Moves

At this moment, hidden undercurrents were also surging in the closely neighbouring lands, from the Earth Domain to the East Heaven Region's Eastern Tang Kingdom where a great disturbance had once arose.

Lin Tianfeng stood in the air, a crowd of Heavenly Thunder Hall experts behind him.

His son, the Thunder Rumbling Young Master Lin Zhou, was standing just beside him.

Gazing in the direction of Broad Creed Mountain, Lin Tianfeng said in a playing tone, "With great chaos erupting in the core lands of their clan, this tribulation will not be easy for Broad Creed Mountain ah."

Lin Zhou looked at the Earth Domain beneath his feet, his expression slightly complicated, as numerous images flashed within his mind.

Once, the Earth Domain, the Decimating Abyss and the Nine Underworlds had left him with extremely unpleasant memories.

In his memories, the changes in his life began with the disasters caused by the Decimating Abyss.

His father, competing with his opponent for the position of the next Lord of the Heavenly Thunder Hall, had continually lost out, and was finally defeated. He then perished in a battle with the Nine Underworlds Evil Devils.

Lin Zhou himself had been heavily injured in a battle with them, to the point that his vitality was injured at its core, virtually putting a stop to his future improvements in cultivation.

Afterwards, his position in the clan had plummeted greatly, and he was completely left in the dust by Yan Shan and the others.

At that time, his lover with whom he had gone through all those hard times, Li Jingwan, had also died at the hands of a fallen practitioner, which became a cause for great regret in his life.

“Now, everything is different,” Lin Zhou closed his eyes, although there were some changes that left him despondent to the extreme.

Lin Zhou opened his eyes once more, gazing in the direction of Broad Creed Mountain like his father Lin Tianfeng, “Father, the people of the Sacred Sun Clan will not be unable to contain themselves and blindly make a move, right? Helping the Decimating Abyss to destroy Broad Creed Mountain with the Nine Underworlds descending afterwards would not be good for everyone at all.”

Lin Tianfeng said, “They won’t. Even if the heads of some aren’t clear, those who are calm will also stop them.”

Lin Zhou nodded, not speaking.

Lin Tianfeng flipped his hand, a bow that flickered with purple light appearing within his palm, “However, even if Yuan Zhengfeng is in seclusion, just a Devil Saint Yuan Tian will not be able to do much to Broad Creed Mountain. Broad Creed Mountain is not that weak.”

“We can’t let them deal with the Decimating Abyss smoothly. Two sides gravely injured and one securing a tragic victory is the situation that we would be happy to see.”

A black pill appeared within Lin Tianfeng’s hands, which he strung on the bowstring before pulling it back.

The bow that flickered with purple light instantly emitted the shocking sound of thunder, piercing to the point that it seemed able to penetrate the very heavens.

This bow was precisely the high-grade spirit artifact of the Heavenly Thunder Hall, the Heaven Shocker, having long been famed alongside the Sacred Sun Clan’s Sun Shooter as the current top bows of the Eight Extremities World.

Looking at the black pill in Lin Tianfeng’s palm, Lin Zhou thought, “Anti-Sun; the Sacred Sun Clan should have had three of these, and has given our clan one. This time, they will most likely also use another, and that still leaves one...”

Lin Tianfeng's bow pointed not in the direction of the Earth Domain beneath him, but straight up at the sky overhead.

Above the group from the Heavenly Thunder Hall, countless spirit patterns expanded in the sky overhead, very quickly forming a massive formation, flickering with the roiling light of thunder.

Around Lin Tianfeng, countless spirit talismans swirled, transforming into spirit arrays before assembling to form a heavenly altar, as the sky filled with the wild dance of snakes of thunder.

He released the bowstring and a dark light shot straight overhead, entering into the formation before disappearing.

The formation circulated mightily before very quickly regaining its calm.

Lin Tianfeng nodded satisfiedly, "Anti-Sun, well deserving of its reputation."

"Our target this time is primarily the Clear Qi Robe. As long as we can get this Sacred Artifact, it would not have been a wasted trip," Lin Tianfeng said, "If the Flame Devils at the East Sea cause a disturbance once more, Turbid Wave Pavilion and Jade Sea City will be unable to focus their attention here; the Hall Lord will mainly guard against Infinite Boundless Mountain."

“However, if the Sacred Sun Clan’s Huang Guanglie emerges from seclusion having improved successfully, Infinite Boundless Mountain and the greatly wounded Broad Creed Mountain would be hard pressed to stand against them even joining hands. That would be the chance for our Heavenly Thunder Hall.”

“If the Sacred Sun Clan wants to destroy Broad Creed Mountain, let them do it. The most important thing for our clan is increasing our strength.”

Keeping Shocking Heaven, Lin Tianfeng said, “Otherwise, with the strength of the Sacred Sun Clan shooting up once more, it will be hard to say how our future interactions with them will go.”

“Whether we are allies or subordinates will eventually depend on the strength of our two sides.”

Lin Zhou’s gaze was calm, yet seemed to have flames blazing within as he focused in the direction of Broad Creed Mountain, “That’s right; at the end of the day, it still all comes down to strength.”

Currently, at Broad Creed Mountain, Elder Zhang stood at the forefront line of defense. He slammed down with a Heavenly Broad Creed Palm, seemingly resembling the heavens collapsing and the earth concaving inwards as he mightily shattered the brains of a Black Nightmare Mountain Martial Grandmaster before him!

The Black Nightmare Martial Grandmaster’s heavenly altar collapsed and dispersed, his spirit arrays shattered and

disintegrated, his countless spirit talismans were reduced to nothing.

A late Essence Talisman Martial Grandmaster expert, at the ninth level of the Martial Grandmaster realm, had his life ended in Broad Creed Mountain just like that!

Of the entire Black Nightmare Mountain, only two late Essence Talisman Martial Grandmasters remained, both Elders of Black Nightmare Mountain in the past.

However, one of them had already perished at Elder Zhang's palm.

Seeing that Broad Creed Mountain had begun to switch from defence to offence, and greatly held the upper hand, the other did not dare to forcibly clash with the Transcending Mortality Martial Grandmaster Elder Zhang head-on as he hurriedly fled.

Elder Zhang snorted coldly, saying to Fu Enshu and the others, "Do not pursue them; guard our clan vigilantly. We must prevent the Sacred Sun Clan and other forces from launching a sneak attack on us. This old man will go to Yan Di's side, to first take care of Yuan Tian and Xin Dongping before saying anything else."

"You all remain here. If nothing unexpected occurs, retreat to Converting Lake Peak of the back mountains and meet up with junior apprentice-sister He. Everything will wait for after this old man and Yan Di have settled things over there."

Fu Enshu and the others naturally knew that after taking care of Yuan Tian and Xin Dongping, with the power of the Clear Qi Grand Formation and the Clear Qi Robe, the situation could be instantly resolved. It was a key, decisive factor for the current situation.

Guided by Yan Di, Elder Zhang entered the foreign dimension.

There, Yan Di was already at the absolute upper hand. If not for wanting to leave Yuan Tian and Xin Dongping completely behind for good, he would already have emerged victorious.

After arriving, Elder Zhang immediately attacked Xin Dongping with his palm.

Yan Di began focusing his strength, launching a fierce assault on the Devil Saint Yuan Tian.

The situation was even more one-sided now; Yuan Tian's expression was grave, but Xin Dongping was instead muttering to himself, "...it should be arriving about now?"

Just at this time, the Clear Qi Grand Formation abruptly shook!

Accompanied by the resounding twang of the bows of the World Illuminating Lord and Lin Tianfeng, two Anti-Suns shot out and merged into the respective formations of the Sacred Sun Clan and the Heavenly Thunder Hall. Then, two majestic forces released from outside of the Heaven Domain shot mightily over.

Seemingly formless and immaterial, yet shaking space itself.

Resembling two formless massive heaven-breaking arrows, they were targeted straight at Broad Creed Mountain!

Entering the area enveloped by the Clear Qi Grand Formation, these two formless forces instantly clashed intensely with the grand formation.

The massive formation that had originally been concealed within the air instantly had its innumerable spirit patterns light up with a brilliant lustre, as intense fluctuations were emitted.

Under the forces of the strange, tyrannical Anti-Suns, Broad Creed Mountain's guardian formation, the Clear Qi Formation, began heaving up and down like the surface of a lake, shaking intensely.

Space vaguely seemed to distort at this moment!

Within the foreign dimension, Yan Di's eyes suddenly surged madly with a cold light, the runes within his pupils shattering mightily, reduced to flowing light.

In the heavens and earth within this entire space, a great amount of runes surfaced, disordered beyond compare!

HSSB 291: Reversal!

At this moment, intense changes suddenly occurred in the Clear Qi Grand Formation that enveloped the entire Broad Creed Mountain.

The formation surged, the surrounding heavens and earth of Broad Creed Mountain resembling roiling cloth as it distorted unceasingly.

The equilibrium of the nearby spiritual qi was instantly thrown into chaos, a large number of spiritual qi forming vortexes clearly visible to the naked eye filling the air above Broad Creed Mountain.

In the sky above Broad Creed Mountain were thousands of massive vortexes rotating at different speeds, leading to a strange, distorted feeling of dissonance that caused people's heads to spin.

The phrase of the heavens rotating and the earth spinning was completely and truly fulfilled at this moment.

On the mountain, Elder Gong, Fu Enshu and the other bigwigs of Broad Creed Mountain had originally already begun sweeping up the invading enemies.

A great number of the invading enemies had already been killed, and some had even already begun retreating and escaping.

However, the heavens and the earth suddenly changed at this moment.

The circulation of the Clear Qi Grand Formation became chaotic beyond compare.

The enemy began launching a counterattack in the midst of this chaos, amongst them also Elder Wang and other peak experts who had once been of Broad Creed Mountain.

Since Elder Zhang had entered the foreign dimension to help Yan Di, once the enemy began counterattacking, the situation on the mountain instantly turned chaotic once more.

On the back mountain, the Converting Lake Peak, outside the seclusion grounds of the old Chief Yuan Zhengfeng, a white-haired old woman looked at the chaos in the sky with a grave expression on her face.

She roared, pushing out with her palms against the chaotic vortexes of spiritual qi,.

An enormous Heavenly Broad Creed Avatar appeared, performing the same motion. A massive pair of hands that obscured the heavens extended, enveloping Converting Lake Peak.

And on the other Water Ridge Peak, Fang Zhun had originally been suppressing the Devilish Domain Grand Formation, preventing the descent of the Nine Underworlds.

Of Broad Creed Mountain, in terms of understanding towards devilish qi and the Nine Underworlds, he stood stably in the top three.

However, with the entire spiritual qi flow of Broad Creed Mountain suddenly turning chaotic at this moment, even Fang Zhun found it hard to deal with.

That abnormally terrifying Nine Underworlds aura that bewildered human hearts instantly surged madly!

Numerous streams of black devilish qi surged into the air, not just enveloping the Heaven Sealing Gorge, even enveloping the entire Water Ridge Peak, and even continuing to extend to other places of Broad Creed Mountain.

The dense devilish qi gradually gained the feeling of stickiness, resembling sludge as it emanated outwards, filling up the area surrounding Water Ridge Peak, with a terrifying devilish domain being formed.

Above Water Ridge Peak, the devilish qi transformed into an entire sky of black fog, bloodred lightning descending unceasingly from within.

Within the formation, countless black spirit patterns, in the form of chains, entangled the tall golden tower.

A grave look surfaced on Fang Zhun's face as he sucked in a deep breath, decisively intercrossing his palms.

Guided by Fang Zhun, those countless black spirit patterns which had originally wanted to congregate at the tall golden tower instead all entangled him, avoiding the tall golden tower.

Fang Zhun sat in the meditative position at the top of the tall golden tower, preventing the door of red light from appearing, projecting a passageway on the ground that led to the Nine Underworlds.

The black spirit patterns entangled him more and more tightly, bolts of red lightning descending from above one after another, continuously slamming mightily onto his body without rest.

Fang Zhun's expression did not change as spirit talismans swirled around him, forming spirit arrays, and transforming into a heavenly altar. He sat there unyielding at the top of the tall golden tower, withstanding the attacks and the encroachment of the Devilish Domain Grand Formation.

Majestic sword-intent of the Limitless Heavenly Sword transformed into a bright sword-light that surged into the heavens, resembling an eternally bright lighthouse in the darkness of the infinite night.

Suppressed by him, the Devilish Domain Grand Formation finally stopped expanding.

However, Fang Zhun's expression had not relaxed. Raising his head and gazing into the distance, while his vision was obstructed by dense black fog, he could still vaguely guess the situation on the outside.

“A change has suddenly occurred with the Clear Qi Grand Formation. Perhaps it is the scheme of senior apprentice-uncle Xin; this way, his chances have increased.”

Fang Zhun's expression was grave. While he could still hold on here, suppressing the Devilish Domain Grand Formation, the crux that would decide victory still lay with the Clear Qi Grand Formation and Yan Di.

If they were unable to hold off Yuan Tian and Xin Dongping there, tribulation would descend on the entire Broad Creed Mountain.

A Xin Dongping who controlled the Clear Qi Grand Formation, joining hands with the Martial Saint Yuan Tian, would hold a domineering momentum that was hard to withstand.

As Fang Zhun guessed it, at this moment, within the foreign dimension, the situation which had originally been completely one-sided suddenly changed greatly!

The Clear Qi Grand Formation shook intensely, as Yan Di instantly felt that his connection with the grand formation was cut off.

Within the air, spirit patterns mightily collapsed one after another, the dispersed runes reassembling speedily, yet already in a greatly different form than before.

Xin Dongping abruptly roared mightily at this moment, profound runes appearing on his palms once more.

What caused the hearts of Yan Di and Elder Zhang to sink was that within Xin Dongping's pupils, similar runes to those of Yan Di earlier actually began to surface!

Xin Dongping opened his eyes, divine light spilling out from within as countless streams of glowing light appeared within the foreign dimension, boosting his strength.

The control of the Clear Qi Grand Formation, shifted once more!

While a long roar, Xin Dongping's Limitless Heavenly Avatar expanded madly in size, the power it showed seemingly not inferior to that of the Devil Saint Yuan Tian in the least.

Xin and Yuan moved simultaneously, together meeting Yan Di, bolstered by the Clear Qi Robe, head-on.

Within the foreign dimension, a jet-black crack instantly appeared, a spatial crack.

Xin Dongping was not like Yan Di, worrying about keeping the shockwaves of their fight within the foreign dimension, as under

the violent clash of forces, the foreign dimension was almost ripped apart.

At this moment, having become the primary controller of the Clear Qi Grand Formation, he began wrecking the foreign dimension here.

The pressure on Yan Di increased greatly, as he could only just hold on.

Having entered Transcending Mortality, with the Clear Qi Robe on him, even one against two, Yan Di still dared to fight.

However, wanting to trap Yuan Tian and Xin Dongping within the foreign dimension was becoming increasingly hard.

If the two escaped, with any casual moves of theirs, the others of Broad Creed Mountain would be drawn in.

The situation within the foreign dimension completely reversed at this moment.

Xin Dongping brandished his sword, his majestic sword-light resembling the heavenly river flowing in reverse as it forcibly broke through Elder Zhang's Broad Creed Heavenly Avatar!

Elder Zhang let out a muffled groan as one of the shoulders of his Broad Creed Heavenly Avatar was shattered, with the half of its chest that was connected to it also breaking apart.

Xin Dongping struck out with another sword, the sword-light disintegrating to form numerous dots of light that enveloped Elder Zhang, actually forming a mini heaven and earth of their own.

Within the mini heaven and earth, an ethereal, heavy sword-intent assaulted Elder Zhang from all directions.

Elder Zhang grit his teeth and withstood it with great effort, although he was trapped within and unable to extricate himself.

Xin Dongping brandished his sword once more, attacking Yan Di alongside Yuan Tian.

While Yan Di had fallen to the disadvantage in his control over the Clear Qi Grand Formation, he still diligently worked on his communication with it, fighting over it with Xin Dongping.

From the Clear Qi Robe on him, countless streams of clear qi emanated, obscuring the heavens and covering the earth, sustaining the foreign dimension's existence.

The Heavenly Dragon Sabre resembled a purple dragon of light as it traversed the space unceasingly, clashing against Yuan Tian and Xin Dongping.

Wielding a sabre in his right hand, Yan Di formed a sword with his left hand's index and middle fingers, striking out with a sword, seemingly sealed, simple to the extreme, yet all-encompassing,

filled with a vigorous air.

It was precisely the Great Heaven Earth Sword of the Eight Extreme Arts.

As that sword emerged, it contained both attack and defence in one.

Yan Di used the Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre in his right hand for attack and the Great Heaven Earth Sword in his left hand for defence, meeting Yuan Tian and Xin Dongping head-on, not retreating a single step!

Xin Dongping was neither harried nor flustered in the least as he said mildly, “Yan Di, this old man thought that his discernment was good enough, having never thought that I still saw awry, already appraising you as highly as possible, yet still underestimating you in the end.”

“However, having lost the support of the Clear Qi Grand Formation, even having stepped into Transcending Mortality, there is still a limit for your wielding of the Clear Qi Robe, with a great depletion of energy. As time passes, you will only get weaker and weaker.”

He struck out with his sword, meeting Yan Di’s Immeasurable Heavenly Sabre head-on.

The foreign dimension instantly shook once more, as though it

might collapse at any moment!

HSSB 292: Yan Zhaoge Coming To Reinforce

After Yan Di lost control of the grand formation which was controlling the foreign dimension, it became increasingly unstable.

A fissure seemed to split within the sky. It poured out a violent amount of power, making it seem almost as if the sky itself was bleeding.

This force originated perhaps from Yan Di, perhaps from Xin Dongping, or perhaps even Yuan Tian.

Regardless of who it was, it was like a natural disaster as it posed a huge threat to Broad Creed Mountain below.

At this time, Xin Dongping had managed to wrest away the control of the Clear Qi Grand Formation. With the power of the grand formation bolstering him, his attacks against Yan Di became increasingly aggressive.

At this moment, Broad Creed Mountain had lost the usual grand formation that guarded it.

Every one of the frightening shockwaves emanating from the spatial fissure in the sky would cause enormous damage wherever it landed.

Where any one of them landed, it was as though a devastating earthquake had struck the area.

The previously elegant and untouchable mountain peaks were now bathed in a baptism of blood and fire.

Today, Broad Creed Mountain's eight peaks received a cruel tribulation.

Although the guardian grand formation was no longer protecting them, countless martial practitioners had lived and cultivated here over the past generations.

Over time, the accumulated true martial intent of these cultivators had been refining these peaks.

These seemingly ordinary mountains had attained the hardness of Vajra. Once, when the clan had just been established, any experts could have easily cleaved through them.

Now, even peak Martial Grandmaster experts would find it hard to even damage Broad Creed Mountain's eight peaks.

However, now, a sword-light shot out of the spatial fissure in the sky and directly struck one of the eight peaks, the Fire Leaving Peak, cleanly diagonally slicing off a great portion of it!

The peak which had originally been smooth and unmarred was now sharp and jagged.

A rolling grey fog full of devilish qi also poured out of the spatial fissure. The fog quickly spread throughout all of Broad Creed Mountain.

Whether it was the Broad Creed Mountain or the Decimating Abyss martial practitioners, when they encountered the grey fog, they would fall into a trance and feel suffocated.

For those with low cultivation bases, enveloped by the fog, they would be unable to resist it and die.

For Fang Zhun, who was attempting to suppress the Devilish Domain Grand Formation, receiving this disturbance, it upset the fragile balance and made it even more difficult for him to continue suppressing the formation.

The spatial fissures in the sky would appear suddenly, release devastating waves of energy, and then instantly disappear.

However, new cracks would quickly open again.

Even more worrying was the fact that the cracks began to appear more and more frequently as the interval between each appearance became shorter.

Every time a spatial fissure appeared, it would bring a disaster onto Broad Creed Mountain.

The Elder He situated outside of the Heaven Sealing Gorge

remained expressionless as she saw these events unfold.

Her thin and frail frame suddenly straightened up as her enormous true martial avatar rose up behind her on the mountain peak. Completely disproportionate with her small size, the giant raised both its hands to the sky.

A majestic fist-intent with the power to overturn the heavens rose up towards the sky, resembling a true heaven-stabilising pillar.

With the external help of Elder He, the foreign dimension stabilized somewhat. The rate of spatial fissures appearing seemed to greatly lessen.

However, the violent forces of the spatial distortion greatly pressured Elder He. Under the continuous assault of the spatial distortion, her figure began to bend.

At this moment, a streak of light appeared on the horizon as it shot towards Broad Creed Mountain.

Having resolved the issue at Lianhu County, Yan Zhaoge and Shi Tie hurried back to reinforce the clan.

Yan Zhaoge and Shi Tie shot across the sky as they approached Broad Creed Mountain.

As they neared, they saw an enormous distortion in the Clear Qi

Grand Formation.

It was as if two invisible attacks had shot out as the formation creased and distorted like a wrinkling sheet of paper.

Yan Zhaoge frowned as he sensed the changes in the grand formation. As he sensed the changes, his expression changed. “The formation has become disordered and unstable. However, traces still remain of someone having tampered with the formation.”

Xu Fei’s expression was grave. “Elder Yan received the control of the formation directly from Grand Master. Not having to make any special alterations, he could already properly wield and unleash its power normally.”

“For this kind of situation to occur, someone must have made plans to wrest away control of the formation!”

Yan Zhaoge rubbed his temples. “Xin Dongping! Other than him, no one could do this. What’s even worse is that it seems like he has succeeded...”

The people present felt a sinking feeling.

For control of their grand formation to have landed in Xin Dongping’s hands, everyone present was well aware of the implications.

From the onset, Xin Dongping was someone who stood at the

peak of Martial Grandmasters. He was only one tiny step away from stepping into the Martial Saint realm.

In the entire Eight Extremities World, those Martial Grandmasters who dared to speak of definite confidence in beating Xin Dongping were limited to only Yuan Zhengfeng, who was currently in seclusion.

“If father steps into the Transcending Mortality, stage, he can also stably defeat that old goat.” Yan Zhaoge exhaled. “However, now that Xin Dongping has the backing of the grand formation, his combat prowess is equivalent to someone in the Martial Saint realm. What’s more, the Devil Saint is also there. Even though father can probably defend against them for some time, Broad Creed Mountain will be ruined.”

Shi Tie’s gaze did not waver as he stared unblinkingly in the direction of Broad Creed Mountain.

Ah Hu worriedly asked, “Young Master, what was that essence fluctuation just now?”

Yan Zhaoge answered, “It’s an attack from external forces. Two concurrent attacks from two different directions gave Xin Dongping the chance he needed.”

“Heaven Breaking Formation Shattering Thunder, Anti-Sun, Earth-Returning Talisman, Nine Palaces Inversion Ritual...my guess is that out of these things, it was possibly one or two of them,” Yan Zhaoge turned to look at the Fire Domain in the south,

“Come to think of it, the Sacred Sun Clan possessed Anti-Suns, though that was an old matter of six hundred years ago.”

“From the looks of it, it seems that they managed to find a couple more.” Yan Zhaoge let out a cold laugh. “Anti-Sun... it requires at least a high-grade spirit artifact to shoot it. From the two different directions that they came from, it seems as if this attack isn’t solely orchestrated by the Sacred Sun Clan. The Heavenly Thunder Hall also had a hand in it.”

Shi Tie’s expression was unchanging like steel. “First we will overcome this trial. Then, we will repay these debts one by one.”

Feeling the rapid fluctuations in spiritual energy of the grand formation, Yan Zhaoge suddenly said, “Eldest apprentice-uncle, please wait a moment.”

Shi Tie stopped and looked at him. Yan Zhaoge solemnly nodded his head. “I may have a plan, but I first need to closely feel the transformations within the Clear Qi Grand Formation.”

“Alright.” Shi Tie chose to believe in Yan Zhaoge, whose outstanding accomplishments in formations had continuously astonished others. Even though his heart was burning with impatience, he still halted where they were.

As soon as they landed, Yan Zhaoge kneeled down and placed both palms on the ground.

With his hands as the core, a dense web of spirit patterns appeared on the ground, mirroring the enormous Clear Qi Grand Formation in the sky.

Yan Zhaoge rapidly calculated and pondered the various projections of the formation as Shi Tie and Xu Fei stood guard beside him.

In the distance, two females approached the group. They were Sikong Qing and Feng Yunsheng.

Seeing Shi Tie and Yan Zhaoge, they let out a sigh of relief. “Eldest apprentice-uncle, Master sent us out to meet you. The clan is currently in a critical state.”

Shi Tie asked, “What are the actual circumstances right now?”

Feng Yunsheng rapidly responded, “The Martial Repository’s First Seat Elder Xin Dongping is a traitor, and the Clear Qi Grand Formation has likely fallen into his hands. At the moment, he is in the foreign dimension together with Yuan Tian, fighting against Elder Yan and Elder Zhang. Many of the Elders are seriously injured.”

“In the Heaven Sealing Gorge, a Devilish Domain Grand Formation attempted to open a portal to the Nine Underworlds, but it is currently being suppressed by Elder Fang. Elder He is protecting Grand Master’s seclusion grounds, while Master and the Heaven Sealing Gorge’s First Seat Elder, Elder Gong, are leading the resistance against the Decimating Abyss. However, they have

many experts.”

Learning of the dire state of affairs, everyone’s expressions grew grave.

HSSB 293: The Key To Breaking The Situation

Yan Zhaoge looked solemnly in the direction of Broad Creed Mountain, where black devilish qi surged to the heavens, the usual clear, spiritual mountains currently resembling a ghost domain.

“Internally plagued with the descent of the Nine Underworlds and Xin Dongping attacking father alongside Yuan Tian having wrested control of the grand formation, externally with the Sacred Sun Clan and the Heavenly Thunder Hall watching hungrily by the side,” Yan Zhaoge sucked in a deep breath, “This tribulation, is really a hard one.”

Ah Hu looked rather worriedly at him, “Young Master. The Family Head...”

Yan Zhaoge did not speak, carefully observing Broad Creed Mountain.

Above the mountain peaks, the space was distorting unceasingly, as though it might break apart at any moment, infinite destructive power leaking out from within, descending towards Broad Creed Mountain below.

As spiritual light flickered, from the back mountain Converting Lake Peak, two massive palms extended, as though holding up the sky as they grasped that distorting space, stabilising it as much as possible, such that it would not affect Broad Creed Mountain below.

“That should be Elder He, standing guard for Grand Master, being forced to make a move as well.”

Yan Zhaoge looked to the other side of the back mountains, in the direction of Water Ridge Peak, where devilish qi surged to the heavens, virtually having completely enveloped the mountain.

However, a bright sword-light shot up to the heavens from within the black domain of devilish qi, preventing the devilish domain from expanding.

“This momentum; it’s second apprentice-uncle forcibly suppressing the Devilish Domain Grand Formation.”

Because he could not be sure who the traitor was, after analysing and creating the method of suppressing the Devilish Domain Grand Formation, Yan Zhaoge had not given it to the clan.

The Decimating Abyss’s research and improvements on the Devilish Domain Grand Formation had also been unceasing.

From the start, unable to leave Hell, only able to experiment within, they had then arrived at the point where at Clear Concealed Lake, with a vein of water that originated from Hell, they had been able to set up a formation.

And from the time at the Sand Region, they had also shown their ability to set up Devilish Domain Grand Formations in places far

from Hell, also able to guide the devilish qi to change the location of the descent of the Nine Underworlds.

Through his analysis of the other side's Devilish Domain Grand Formation, Yan Zhaoge's proficiency in breaking these formations had risen unceasingly.

And the Decimating Abyss's side, or rather the Abyss Lord Xin Dongping, through analysing Yan Zhaoge's formation-breaking techniques, had also improved his ability in setting up the formations.

Through the Devilish Domain Grand Formations, Yan Zhaoge had already formlessly duelled with this bigwig many times.

Earlier, when he had still been unable to determine who the traitor was, Yan Zhaoge had only provided his newest technique with which to suppress and break the Devilish Domain Grand Formations to his father, Yan Di.

However, Yan Di was currently battling mighty enemies within a foreign dimension, naturally being unable to pass it down to Fang Zhun.

At this moment, Fang Zhun was completely relying on his cultivation base to suppress the Devilish Domain Grand Formation. Luckily, his cultivation base was much higher than Yan Zhaoge's, his understanding towards the Nine Underworlds devilish qi also far surpassing others.

It was only because of protecting the First Seat Elder of the Heaven Sealing Gorge, Elder Gong earlier, as well as having been trapped within the Heaven Sealing Gorge by Xin Dongping's seal that Fang Zhun's strength had been greatly depleted.

Now, he could only barely suppress the Devilish Domain Grand Formation.

Still, he at least still managed to prevent the Nine Underworlds from directly descending in Broad Creed Mountain.

“The most pressing and also the most key situation here is still father's side,” Yan Zhaoge knelt down on one knee, palms pressed on the ground, ceaselessly feeling the changes in the Clear Qi Grand Formation, “While father still has the Clear Qi Robe on him, the two opponents he is facing, the Devil Saint Yuan Tian and Xin Dongping who has obtained a majority of the control of the clan's grand formation, are equivalent to two Martial Saint experts.”

“It is also thanks to father being able to fight against the both of them at once. Otherwise, either of them able to emerge, they would be able to sweep up the entire situation against us.”

The key was at where Yan Di was, where a heated battle was currently ongoing, with experts battling with the strength of the Martial Saint realm, causing the heavens to roil and the earth to overturn.

Such a situation was already very hard for others to stick a hand in. Even Transcending Mortality Martial Grandmasters seemed to

lack such qualifications.

Fang Zhun included, even if Broad Creed Mountain won a complete victory on all the other fronts, with Fang Zhun, Shi Tie and the others all being freed up, not wresting back control of the clan's grand formation, it would also be very hard to help Yan Di.

Yan Zhaoge sucked in a deep breath, "And so long as father cannot hold on, any other victories would also mean nothing-the general situation would immediately collapse. We do not have much time left."

He swivelled his head to look at Shi Tie, "It is not like there are no methods, but there is some difficulty."

"Because of external enemies, a change happened with the clan's guardian formation, giving Xin Dongping a chance. We have to overturn that now."

"I have a plan, but it requires three routes of troops, having to be executed in three different places surrounding Broad Creed Mountain."

Yan Zhaoge said, "The executors either have to have a sufficient cultivation base or be proficient in the changes in formations. I am willing to lead one side, and eldest-apprentice uncle can lead another. However, I don't know if there is still sufficient manpower within the clan to go the third route. Elder He is guarding Grand Master as well as the clan; how serious are Elder Zhang's injuries?"

Shi Tie looked at Feng Yunsheng and Sikong Qing, “Junior apprentice-brother Fang is suppressing the Devilish Domain Grand Formation, unable to split his attentions. If Elder Zhang’s injuries are too serious, then find junior apprentice-sister Fu.”

Yan Zhaoge now said to the two of them, “We will have to be troubling you. I have some new ways to break the devilish formation and prevent the descent of the Nine Underworlds, requiring one of you to enter the Devilish Domain Grand Formation and inform second apprentice-uncle about them. The other will find Elder Zhang and senior apprentice-aunt Fu, telling them the method used to correct our clan’s grand formation.”

Feng Yunsheng and Sikong Qing exchanged glances, both saying in unison, “I will enter the Devilish Domain Grand Formation to find senior apprentice-uncle Fang.”

Entering the Devilish Domain Grand Formation would clearly be more dangerous.

Yan Zhaoge thought for a moment, “Now is not the time for courtesies. Junior apprentice-sister Feng, go find senior apprentice-uncle Fang, riding over on Pan-Pan. Meeting enemies on the way, evade them if you can. Junior apprentice-sister Sikong, go find Elder Zhang and senior apprentice-aunt Fu.”

Feng Yunsheng nodded, while beside her, Sikong Qing, her gaze unwavering and with no change in her expression, also nodded at his words.

Yan Zhaoge immediately told the method of suppressing the Devilish Domain Grand Formation to Feng Yunsheng.

Feng Yunsheng did not waste time on words. While she did not understand some things on the principles and circulation of formations, she just directly memorized them.

Yan Zhaoge sucked in a deep breath, “Stay safe.”

“You too,” Feng Yunsheng nodded.

At this moment, time was of the essence. After confirming that she had fully memorized what she had to, she jumped onto Pan-Pan.

Pan-Pan also did not act lazy now, extending his claws and racing off into the distance.

Yan Zhaoge directly said to Shi Tie and the others, “The technique to correct the clan’s guardian formation is not to be executed in Broad Creed Mountain itself, or it will be immediately wrecked by Xin Dongping. Therefore, with heaven, earth and human as bases, we will have to simultaneously execute the technique at three different places outside of Broad Creed Mountain. I have precisely calculated these locations.”

After telling the three places to Shi Tie and Sikong Qing, he looked at Xu Fei, “This technique requires the coordination of two

people at each point, one at the helm, and the other assisting. Therefore, senior apprentice-brother Xu will go with eldest-apprentice uncle, assisting him. After finding Elder Zhang or senior apprentice-aunt Fu, junior apprentice-sister Sikong will do the same.”

“If both Elder Zhang and senior apprentice-aunt Fu are able to move, find someone else who can assist, with eldest apprentice-uncle, senior apprentice-aunt Fu and Elder Zhang executing the technique simultaneously. That way, it will be easier to succeed.”

Xu Fei and Sikong Qing nodded together.

Yan Zhaoge swivelled his head and said to Ah Hu, “Ah Hu, you will assist me.”

Ah Hu nodded solemnly.

Shi Tie looked at Yan Zhaoge, “While you are proficient in the changes in formations, with the situation so chaotic at this moment, the enemy doesn’t actually lack Essence Spirit or even Essence Talisman Martial Grandmasters. If the two of you meet some, it might be dangerous.”

HSSB 294: Faced With Danger, Not Shrinking Back!

Yan Zhaoge laughed emotionally, “The entire Broad Creed Mountain is currently facing a great tribulation together, with everyone fighting for their lives and in extreme danger. It is not just me.”

“Rest easy, eldest apprentice-uncle. I will move carefully, avoiding enemies as much as possible if I am able to. After all, wresting back control of the clan’s guardian formation is currently the most pressing matter.”

“Speaking of danger, junior apprentice-sisters Feng and Sikong are the same; you and senior apprentice-brother Xu are actually also similarly faced with danger.”

“And of the entire Broad Creed Mountain, the one currently bearing the greatest pressure is my father.”

After all, Yan Di was currently engaging Yuan Tian and Xin Dongping in battle with his own power, also having to block them, preventing them from harming any others of Broad Creed Mountain.

Looking in the direction of Broad Creed Mountain, Yan Zhaoge was very calm within.

Currently, he had long since become one with Broad Creed

Mountain, sharing the clan's glory, enjoying the resources and benefits given to him by the clan, bearing the protection of the clan, helping to shield him from the winds and the rains.

When he had to stand up to bear the clan's hopes on his shoulders, he naturally would do so.

He had to do so whether or not danger existed ahead, definitely not shrinking back.

"Eldest apprentice-uncle, senior apprentice-brother Xu, junior apprentice-sister Sikong, all of you take care as well," Yan Zhaoge took his leave, bringing Ah Hu along on his way, hurrying towards one of the three designated points.

Time waits for no man. As Yan Zhaoge rushed over, he remained careful, avoiding others as much as possible.

Currently, the vicinity of Broad Creed Mountain was in great chaos, with it hard to distinguish friend for foe. In order to save time as much as possible, Yan Zhaoge made hurrying his greatest priority.

He rushed south from Broad Creed Mountain, a city appearing on the great plains.

While it was already rather far from Broad Creed Mountain, that terrifying Nine Underworlds aura that intimidated people's souls could still be felt.

Getting further from the Devilish Domain Grand Formation, for martial practitioners who had gone through much tempering and possessed firm wills, the influence was not great.

However, it still had a bewitching effect on the ordinary people.

Currently, the atmosphere within the city was tense and restless, people all panicked.

Amidst their panic, people began to look hostilely at one another, the tense situation seeming such that a riot could break out at any moment.

As Yan Zhaoge sped into the city, the ordinary people were completely unable to detect it.

Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners maintained order within the situation, trying to calm them down as much as possible.

This was an important communication hub in the vicinity of Broad Creed Mountain, many different kinds of goods distributed here. The one currently in charge here, a Martial Grandmaster of Broad Creed Mountain of around forty years of age, was named Hong Wen.

Although he was nearly twice as old as Yan Zhaoge, in terms of seniority, they were of the same generation.

“Senior apprentice-brother Hong, please help me to clear up a piece of land at the west part of the city, and do not let any ordinary citizens approach it,” Yan Zhaoge did not bother about courtesies at this moment as he immediately said, “I have urgent need of it!”

Hong Wen also did not waste time on words, immediately nodding, “Leave it to me.”

While he was a mid Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster, being much older and having entered the clan much earlier, Yan Zhaoge’s position and authority in Broad Creed Mountain was extremely special, his authority being similar to that of a First Seat Elder. Therefore, even while he remained a little uncomprehending on this, Hong Wen still speedily ordered for the place to be cleared up for Yan Zhaoge.

Hong Wen was also an able person. While the people were originally already panicked, and this only intensified with them having been made to move away, Hong Wen still stably completed what Yan Zhaoge had asked of him.

Two intersecting streets at the western part of the city, one horizontal, one vertical, were cleared up by him within the shortest possible time.

Yan Zhaoge came to the intersection of the two streets, flipping his palm, an azure light flickering within.

His sword shot out like a wind, a jade-green sword light continuously flying in the air as marks were left behind, not dissipating in a long time.

Very quickly, a massive spirit rune appeared before Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge held the sword in his right hand, extending his left hand, fingers spread apart, pressing down within the air.

The massive rune that flickered with azure light landed on the ground.

Yan Zhaoge swivelled his head to look at the surrounding buildings before sucking in a deep breath, raising the Jade Dragon Sword in his right hand, pointed straight towards the heavens.

While in his other free hand appeared another spirit artifact, the Flying Thunder Sabre.

After stepping into the Martial Grandmaster realm, the low-grade spirit artifacts that Yan Zhaoge could wield was already not just limited to one at once.

With the two spirit artifacts, one pointed to the heavens, one pointed to the earth, Yan Zhaoge let out a light roar, streams of aura-qi emanating from his entire body's acupoints.

As the clouds and the winds surged, with Yan Zhaoge at their centre, a massive hurricane was gradually formed.

This hurricane of aura-qi did not expand, remaining with Yan Zhaoge as its centre, with the massive rune of jade light on the ground as its base.

Gradually, the hurricane actually also turned jade green.

Within the city, the restless, unstable emotions of numerous ordinary citizens seemed to take tangible form at this moment, congregating together to be sucked within that jade green hurricane.

Afterwards, the massive rune beneath Yan Zhaoge's feet had its jade light gradually fade, turning pure white.

As the rune distorted, it grew more and more complicated, gradually expanding into a small, intricate, profound spirit formation.

At the core area where all these many spirit patterns converged, an ancient character appeared.

“人”

The meaning of this ancient character was 'human'.

With a unique technique, Yan Zhaoge was going to wrest control of the Clear Qi Grand Formation back from Xin Dongping's hands.

At specific locations, heaven, earth and human positions had to be established. The position currently occupied by Yan Zhaoge was the human position.

Shi Tie and Xu Fei were heading to the heaven position.

As for Sikong Qing who was finding Fu Enshu and Elder Zhang, whatever the result, with no one heading to the human position here, Yan Zhaoge could only hope that they would be able to make it in time to the earth position.

This technique could not only have Yan Zhaoge see success; it had to have three people work together in unison, and even then, Yan Zhaoge was not completely confident that it would definitely be successful and reverse the entire situation.

The only thing that he could do was perform what he could to the best of his abilities.

“Ah Hu,” Yan Zhaoge called, and having already been instructed earlier, Ah Hu now came up, kneeling on the ground, both palms pressed onto the sprit formation below him.

The radiance on the ‘人’ character grew increasingly bright.

But just at this time, sounds of a commotion suddenly drifted over.

Turning to look, Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu saw a bunch of people rapidly approaching this place.

The one at their head was a late Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster. Yan Zhaoge recognised him as a fellow disciple of Broad Creed Mountain, named Zhu Qian.

It was just that at this moment, Zhu Qian and the bunch of people behind him had all clearly already fallen to the dark side!

As they progressed rampantly, they slaughtered everyone who stood in their path, their target being Hong Wen and the other Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners.

“What’s wrong?” Yan Zhaoge knit his brows, and Ah Hu thought for a moment before answering, “He seems to have been on bad terms with Hong Wen, having some personal enmity. From the looks of it, his mind has descended to the point of being lawless, and is coming over for revenge...”

Before his voice had landed, Zhu Qian saw Yan Zhaoge. Instantly forgetting about Hong Wen, the bloodred light within his eyes surged madly!

Zhu Qian howled furiously, “People of Yuan Zhengfeng’s lineage, you also have today!”

HSSB 295: You Think That I Cannot Beat You?

Seeing Zhu Qian with the look of bloodthirstily encountering a hated enemy, Yan Zhaoge could not help but be somewhat confused, “Huh?”

Zhu Qian ignored even Hong Wen, rushing towards Yan Zhaoge.

Hong Wen, however, could not ignore him as he hurriedly drew his sabre and went forward to block him.

He executed the Eight Sceneries Spirit Sabre of the Eight Extreme Arts, aura-qi surging with infinite variations, subtle and intelligent as he had already mastered its essence profoundly.

Zhu Qian’s eyes were filled with a bloodred light as he said coldly, “You’re courting death.”

He also struck out with a sabre, but of another type of martial art, tough beyond compare, rampaging domineeringly. It was the other sabre art of the Eight Extreme Arts, the Chaotic Elements Uniting Sabre!

As the two sides met, Hong Wen’s sabre-qi instantly began shattering unceasingly.

The Chaotic Elements Uniting Sabre was the toughest, sharpest

art of the Eight Extreme Arts, and Zhu Qian's cultivation base was also higher than Hong Wen's. At this moment, his sabre expanded, sabre-lights sweeping through the air one after another, like fierce, biting winds that could cleave off the peaks of mountains.

Hong Wen knew full well the gap between the cultivation bases of the two. Also being extremely rich in combat experience, he did not fight Zhu Qian head-on, instead entangling with him unceasingly.

While he did not know if Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu could defeat Zhu Qian, the duo was clearly focusing on setting up the formation at this moment, unable to divide their attentions.

Right now, Hong Wen could only hope to hinder Zhu Qian from approaching them.

However, after falling to the dark side, Zhu Qian's strength had risen a step further, brandishing his sabre in great motions, unceasingly hacking at him with the Chaotic Elements Uniting Sabre.

Originally having enmity with Hong Wen, he was now even less inclined to show mercy as he was overfilling with killing intent, wanting to slay Hong Wen on the spot!

Within the formation, while Yan Zhaoge was mostly working on stimulating the '人' character, he also let out a portion of his mind, focusing on the battle between Zhu Qian and Hong Wen.

Ah Hu said from the side, “Young Master, what exactly was that madman saying just now?”

Yan Zhaoge raised his brows slightly, “I have some impression of it; he can be considered to be directly descended from Xin Dongping’s lineage.”

Ah Hu pulled back the corners of his lips, “Able to cultivate in the Eight Extreme Arts, able to cultivate to become a Martial Grandmaster-the clan has also not treated him badly, isn’t it?”

Seeing Hong Wen in danger, Yan Zhaoge slightly raised his voice, “The clan has indeed not ill-treated him, but this person is extremely narrow-minded. Once, with a fellow disciple offending him, he intentionally caused trouble for him on a tempering mission, almost causing that fellow disciple to be heavily injured.”

“As the First Seat of the Disciplinary Hall, eldest apprentice uncle looked into this matter. With the evidence definite, he took from him the chance to take the tests to rise from an elite disciple to a direct disciple.”

Yan Zhaoge said mildly, “Afterwards, similar situations continued as he committed the same offence time and time again, finally completely losing the chance to have a black border on his blue robe.”

Hearing his words, the Zhu Qian who was currently clashing with Hong Wen was instantly greatly enraged. Hacking Hong Wen into retreat, he then pointed his sabre towards Yan Zhaoge.

“A bunch of nonsense; you also nearly killed that guy surnamed Ye in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, but why was it that not only were you not punished for it, you were also continuously rewarded afterwards? It’s because you are Yan Di’s son, and Shi Tie and your father were both disciples of Yuan Zhengfeng!”

Yan Zhaoge rolled his eyes, “I had the Blood Soul Recollection Ceremony to prove my innocence, while there was definite evidence to show that you had definitely broken the clan’s rules.”

“If the two of us were treated the same following that, wouldn’t that then truly be taking the clan’s laws as a joke?”

Zhu Qian’s eyes were bloodshot as he clenched his teeth, “Huh, it was definitely Shi Tie who covered for you, helping you to make a false testimony!”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, shaking his head, “You can think however you like, but it won’t be as you say it is. The truth is what it is.”

Sabre-light lit up within Zhu Qian’s hands as he suddenly hacked fiercely towards Yan Zhaoge, “Brat who distorts things, I’ll see what you say after I slaughter you!”

Yan Zhaoge’s expression did not change as the jade green hurricane spinning around him instantly sent Zhu Qian’s Chaotic Elements Uniting Sabre awry, causing it to miss.

At this moment, the spinning of the hurricane was such that if one was not yet an Essence Spirit Martial Grandmaster, it would be hard for them to break through it.

While Zhu Qian had a low-grade spirit artifact on him, also being at the third level of the Martial Grandmaster realm, at the late Spirit Vessel stage, he was still unable to break through the obstruction of the hurricane and hurt Yan Zhaoge.

His yellowed eyes surged with bloodred light, his entire person seemingly even more frenzied.

The power of the spirit artifact sabre within his hands increased a step further, sabre-light shining as it attempted to forcibly break through the jade green hurricane.

Yan Zhaoge looked calmly at this scene.

“Killing me-it seems like you cannot do it.”

The more composed Yan Zhaoge’s expression, the more enraged Zhu Qian felt.

However, seeing that he was truly unable to break through the obstruction of the jade green hurricane, while killing intent filled his heart, his head instead cooled a bit.

He said coldly, “If you shrink back in that tortoise shell of yours, I will get rid of all the others first.”

Zhu Qian swivelled his head, roaring severely, “Kill everyone in this city. Do not leave a single one!”

With the other people who had come with him currently engaged in battle with Hong Wen and the others, Zhu Qian prepared to first retreat, himself doing the deed.

However, now, he suddenly realised that he had actually also been sucked in place by that jade green hurricane, unable to extricate himself!

Looking at him, Yan Zhaoge suddenly smiled, “That’s why I say that many a times, it is not like however you think matters are, that is the actual truth of the situation.”

The jade green hurricane expanded, already having Zhu Qian completely trapped, only able to proceed forward, not able to retreat.

Zhu Qian’s viciousness had been utterly stimulated as he howled madly, continuing to rush towards Yan Zhaoge.

However, that jade green hurricane resembled chains, also becoming tighter and tighter, obstructing Zhu Qian’s movements.

Zhu Qian was greatly angered, yet was completely helpless against it.

Until he suddenly discovered that the jade green hurricane before him had gradually turned to gold.

Meanwhile, that rune beneath Yan Zhaoge's feet had also turned from pure white to gold.

Zhu Qian suddenly felt his entire body loosen, the hurricane that imprisoned him suddenly easing, expanding outwards. While it still cut off his path of retreat, it prevented him from rushing towards Yan Zhaoge no longer.

He roared like a tiger, his Chaotic Elements Uniting Sabre that had accumulated an unquantifiable amount of his despondence hacking viciously towards Yan Zhaoge.

This sabre gave Zhu Qian a greatly relaxed feeling, as though having been stifled for so long, he had finally been released today, never having felt so comfortable as he currently did.

Zhu Qian could be certain that this sabre surpassed all his previous limits, being the strongest sabre that he had ever unleashed!

While he had long heard of Yan Zhaoge's shocking strength, Zhu Qian did not believe that with his current unprecedented peak, he, at the late Spirit Vessel stage, could lose to someone of the early Spirit Vessel stage.

However, now, a jade light flashed before his eyes.

The Jade Dragon Sword in his right hand, with the Big Dipper Sword, Yan Zhaoge stably locked down Zhu Qian's sabre.

At the same time, releasing the Flying Thunder Sabre on his left hand, Yan Zhaoge raised it, flicking his wrist!

A terrifying force that seemed able to overturn the very heavens descended towards Zhu Qian!

Heavenly Broad Creed Palm!

Zhu Qian raised his left hand, his entire body's aura-qi surging to block this palm of Yan Zhaoge's.

However, not waiting for him to recover, Yan Zhaoge executed the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm with Finger Flicking Shocking Thunder, immediately exerting force a second time!

The terrifying force directly crushed Zhu Qian!

Yan Zhaoge said mildly, "Do you think that the hurricane was blocking the path just now because I felt I could not beat you?"

HSSB 296: Grand Reversal

What was the feeling of being pressured by Mount Tai?

Zhu Qian had never experienced it before, but he felt like currently, Mount Tai was weighing down on him from above.

Yan Zhaoge's terrifying palm descended, causing all of Zhu Qian's bones to crack with a muffled crunch.

Zhu Qian was covered in red as terrifying beads of blood trickled out from all of his pores, making him look like a being of only blood.

Zhu Qian clenched his teeth and stimulated his aura-qi.

Within his dantian, his aura-qi that was filled with spirituality had returned to simplicity, turning into an existence like the great earth, resembling fertile soil, allowing it to nurture an even more remarkable force.

Zhu Qian's knowledge on the martial dao and his spirituality from communication with the heavens and the earth had already transformed into a spirit seed, nourished within that spirit soil.

Finally, the spirit seed had gradually undergone a qualitative change, resembling a sprout growing out from the seed, beginning to change its body and switch its bones!

A powerful force was in this way born, forming the powerful foundation of a late Spirit Vessel Martial Grandmaster.

A martial practitioner's true martial soul had already begun gradually appearing in an embryonic form.

Zhu Qian stimulated his spirit seed, power surging madly, wanting to raise the heavens that were weighing down on him once more.

However, Yan Zhaoge didn't give him this chance, his speed of force exertion even greater!

Supported by Finger Flicking Shocking Thunder, Yan Zhaoge's third Heavenly Broad Creed Palm descended, first extinguishing the force Zhu Qian had just unleashed, quashing it before it had even grown!

The violent power that caused the heavens to collapse and the earth to concave inwards completely destroyed all Zhu Qian's resistance as well as hope.

Zhu Qian's arm was jolted away, Yan Zhaoge's palm descending as it mashed his brain into a pulp!

Yan Zhaoge seemed like he had done a completely insignificant thing as he completely ignored Zhu Qian lying limp before him, instead stomping down with his foot.

Accompanied by Yan Zhaoge's stomping motion, the golden formation continued circulating.

Above him, complicated, profound spirit patterns also appeared, resembling a greatly miniaturised version of Broad Creed Mountain's guardian formation.

These spirit patterns combined with the rune beneath Yan Zhaoge's feet, before streams of qi began expanding outwards into the surrounding area.

The streams of qi extended far into the distance, soundlessly and discreetly combining with the true Clear Qi Grand Formation.

Standing on the golden rune, Yan Zhaoge could only feel like changes had happened to his vision, as he seemed to be standing on the clouds, looking at the world down below.

"Human position, established!" Yan Zhaoge let out a long breath, not relaxing, instead making use of his own formation being connected with the Clear Qi Grand Formation to analyse this massive formation a step further.

After he had intentionally diligently given himself supplementary lessons, Yan Zhaoge's proficiency in formations had become rather outstanding.

However, as the guardian formation of one of the current era's six great Sacred Grounds, the Clear Qi Grand Formation also had

remarkable areas of its own.

Whilst possessing great power, its formation principles were also rather abstruse and profound.

While after Yan Di had taken up the position of Chief, he had received control of the Clear Qi Grand Formation from Yuan Zhengfeng, although Yan Zhaoge was his son, some rules could still not be abolished, and he would not easily pass down the profundities of the Clear Qi Grand Formation to Yan Zhaoge.

At the end of the day, Yan Zhaoge's understanding towards the Clear Qi Grand Formation was still limited. Now, he had to make good use of the time to carry out projections on it within his head.

However, to Yan Zhaoge, it was not like there was completely nowhere to start.

“It is also originated from the Clear Qi lineage. However, having been improved by generations of Broad Creed Mountain experts, it is already greatly different,” Yan Zhaoge gradually came to an understanding of it within his heart, “It is a pretty intricate formation.”

“Despite earlier having taken two Anti-Suns that have the effect of breaking formations, causing the changes in the formation to be rather severe, this can still be remedied and corrected.”

Yan Zhaoge gazed in the direction of Broad Creed Mountain

whilst also unceasingly projecting changes in the formation, “Helping father to regain control of it would be hard. However, the control of the formation can be temporarily stripped from Xin Dongping, shifting it over to one of us in the three established positions.”

As Yan Zhaoge made projections on the formation, Ah Hu was left with nothing to do, but he did not go far, instead remaining standing there, guarding over Yan Zhaoge, remaining vigilant over all the changes in the surrounding region.

Meanwhile, Hong Wen led a group of Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners, dispersing to kill all the Decimating Abyss martial practitioners who had entered the city alongside Zhu Qian.

As Yan Zhaoge analysed the formation, his heart suddenly moved.

Standing at the human position, he could feel another force integrating into the Clear Qi Grand Formation.

That force originated from the ‘earth’ position of the three positions-heaven, earth and human.

Yan Zhaoge closed his eyes, his mind entering deep within the formation.

Within the dark space of consciousness, countless spirit patterns that flickered with white light surfaced.

A golden dot of light was visible beneath Yan Zhaoge's feet, at the boundary of the grand formation of white light, representing the 'human' position that Yan Zhaoge was currently at.

In the distance, at another end of the grand formation of white light, another golden dot lit up.

"Is it senior apprentice-aunt Fu or Elder Zhang?" Yan Zhaoge's heart eased, his plan already two thirds successful.

Opening his eyes, Yan Zhaoge could also feel that that terrifying aura of the Nine Underworlds that threw people's minds into chaos and disorder also seemed to be slowly weakening.

As he gazed far into the distance in the direction of Broad Creed Mountain, he could vaguely see that the black devilish qi suffusing the air above Broad Creed Mountain that surged into the heavens had dimmed somewhat.

"Good!" Yan Zhaoge nodded, letting out a long breath, "Over at junior apprentice-sister Feng's side, it looks like she has also passed my technique to suppress the Devilish Domain Grand Formation over to second apprentice-uncle. With second apprentice-uncle's cultivation base as well as understanding towards the Decimating Abyss and the Nine Underworlds, such immediate effects have been seen."

The previously disadvantageous situation was currently swinging towards them bit by bit!

Yan Zhaoge stood in the intersection of the two long streets, surrounded by a massive rune, countless spirit patterns extending into the distance, connected to the Clear Qi Grand Formation.

Feeling the various changes in the circulation of the formation, Yan Zhaoge unceasingly made projections and calculations within his heart.

“The human position and the earth position have already been established. As soon as the heaven position is in order, a grand reversal can be secured in a single go!”

The ‘人’ character beneath Yan Zhaoge’s feet shone a bright gold, seemingly leading innumerable wills to congregate at this point.

Under the common power of the Clear Qi Grand Formation and the ‘人’ character, within the city, the originally restless, unstable hearts of the people gradually began to calm at this moment.

While they still felt panicked, no longer were they influenced by the aura of the Nine Underworlds, infinitely magnifying the negative thoughts within their hearts.

Yan Zhaoge looked in the direction of Broad Creed Mountain, then turned his gaze elsewhere.

There, the ‘天’ character ought to be established by Shi Tie and Xu Fei as projected by Yan Zhaoge.

However, feeling the changes in the Clear Qi Grand Formation, Yan Zhaoge found that they had still yet to successfully establish the heaven position.

For this technique of his, all three positions had to undergo simultaneous circulation of formations before it could take effect, wresting back control of Broad Creed Mountain's guardian grand formation from Xin Dongping's hands in one go.

In his predictions, Shi Tie's route had been the most stable one.

However, with nothing having happened with so much time having passed, Yan Zhaoge's heart gradually grew anxious.

Before the technique was completely unleashed, he could not leave the human position on his own, all he could do now being wait where he was.

Yan Zhaoge knit his brows tightly, focused on the direction of the heaven position, his expression grave as it had never been before.

HSSB 297: Dream On!

A beam of light streaked through the air.

As Yan Zhaoge hurried towards the human position in the city, bringing Xu Fei along, Shi Tie was also hurrying to where the heaven position was.

Speeding along, Shi Tie's gaze suddenly flickered as he looked into the distance.

In that direction, a powerful, ferocious aura had appeared. It was not foreign, as it seemed to be the 'Scaly Dragon King' Sima Chui.

The other party also seemed to have detected Shi Tie's presence, but seemed to be mindful of something as he did not come over.

Xu Fei looked at Shi Tie who retracted his gaze, saying calmly, "It's Sima Chui."

"Master..." Xu Fei looked somewhat worriedly at the wound that still existed on Shi Tie's chest.

Shi Tie shook his head, "Relax, I'm fine."

Xu Fei spoke no longer, but the worry within his gaze did not lessen in the least.

Shi Tie brought Xu Fei along, continuing speedily on their way. After a while, he gazed down below.

There, a boy of around eleven to twelve years old was currently clashing with the enemy.

Despite his young age, he was shockingly already a Martial Scholar, his qi and blood resembling dragons. He resembled a young dragon as he slew his enemies mightily, sending them flying.

It was clearly Shi Tie's newest disciple, Ying Longtu.

At this time, Ying Longtu still looked a little blank, but he was incomparably focused.

His movements could not be said to be vicious or brutal, but he still clearly remembered the teachings of his elders and senior apprentice-brothers and sisters that mercy to the enemy was brutality to oneself.

Ying Longtu directly sent an enemy flying with a punch, drawing the attention of enemies with even higher cultivation bases.

His opponent lunged towards him, but stiffened midway, falling limply to the ground, directly dying.

The other Decimating Abyss martial practitioners in the surroundings all suffered the same fate as him.

Towards these Martial Scholars, Shi Tie had no need to personally move at all. Just his fist-intent was sufficient to shock all of them to death on the spot.

Feeling his Master's aura, Ying Longtu raised his head for a look, a happy smile appearing on his face.

“Let's go together,” Shi Tie did not waste time on words, directly sweeping Ying Longtu along, not ceasing in his footsteps as he continued racing towards his destination.

Ying Longtu looked blankly at Shi Tie and Xu Fei, “Master, senior apprentice-brother, there are so many enemies. They're attacking the mountain...”

Xu Fei said, “Han Long'er, rest easy. We will precisely be going to deal with them now.”

Ying Longtu firmly nodded.

The three hurried along, very quickly arriving at their destination which Yan Zhaoge had told them about earlier.

This was a mountain peak outside Broad Creed Mountain, standing tall amongst the endless chain of mountains, seemingly wanting to pierce through the clouds above.

Shi Tie stood at that mountain peak, punching out, a great amount of light surging into existence, forming a massive rune which landed on the mountain peak.

The light shot straight up into the horizon, vaguely forming a pillar of light within the air.

Shi Tie raised his hand, a hurricane forming with him as its centre, enveloping this lone peak.

Enveloped by the hurricane, streams of spiritual qi unceasingly gathered between the heavens and the earth, the rune distorting as it gradually expanded to form a small, intricate, profound formation, its spirit patterns emitting a pure white glow.

At the core area around which the countless spirit patterns congregated, an ancient character appeared.

天.

The meaning of the ancient character was ‘heaven’.

Seeing this, Xu Fei knew that it was his turn, as he knelt down on one knee, his palms pressing down on the rocks of the mountain peak together.

The radiance of the ‘天’ character grew brighter at this moment.

Ying Longtu stood by the side somewhat uncomprehendingly, looking curiously at the actions of his Master and senior apprentice-brother.

As time passed, the radiance of the flickering spirit patterns gradually turned from pure white to gold.

Shi Tie and Xu Fei's spirits both lifted greatly. According to Yan Zhaoge, this meant that their task was soon to see success.

However, Shi Tie now said calmly, "According to Zhaoge, the situation now is actually already on the right track."

His gaze moved between Xu Fei and Ying Longtu, "While two people are still needed to maintain this formation, you two, Xu Fei and Longtu, can do it as well, just that it will take somewhat longer."

Hearing his words, Xu Fei's pupils abruptly dilated, "An enemy attack?"

No change in expression could be seen whatsoever on Shi Tie's granite-like face, "There are people approaching, and they bear ill will."

"Three people, all late Essence Talisman Martial Grandmasters."

Hearing his words, Xu Fei's gaze remained firm, but his expression also turned grave.

Shi Tie said, "I will block the enemy. Xu Fei, you tell the method to Longtu as quickly as possible, with you replacing me at the helm, and Longtu supporting you."

He looked earnestly at Xu Fei, "Prioritise the overall situation; you must ensure that we wrest back the Clear Qi Grand Formation."

An unconcealable look of worry was visible within Xu Fei's eyes, but he did not waste time on useless words, his expression incomparably grave as he let out a long breath, saying, "This disciple will give it my all."

Shi Tie nodded, leaping as he left the mountain peak.

He sped off at an extreme speed, getting as far away from the '天' character as quickly as possible, meeting the encroaching enemy on his own initiative.

Soon, Shi Tie halted, standing in mid-air, gazing silently into the distance.

On the horizon, three shining streaks of light very quickly arrived before him.

Shi Tie's gaze swept past the three, no joy nor sorrow within, calm as still water, "You three, I have long heard of you."

He recognised all three of his opponents.

One of them, a grey-bearded old man, was someone he was incomparably familiar with. He was Elder Wang of Broad Creed Mountain, of the same generation as Yuan Zhengfeng and Xin Dongping, having entered the clan even earlier than them.

Elder Wang had been exposed the earliest, due to the Heavenly Thunder Hall revealing the identities of some Decimating Abyss operatives. He was also the Decimating Abyss's most powerful, highest ranking martial practitioner of Broad Creed Mountain beneath Xin Dongping.

Afterwards, he had been imprisoned within the Heaven Sealing Gorge.

This day, after Xin Dongping had gravely wounded the First Seat Elder of the Heaven Sealing Gorge, Elder Gong, he had released all the major criminals imprisoned within the Heaven Sealing Gorge, with Elder Wang at their head.

Looking over, Shi Tie could not help but feel forlorn as he saw that Elder Wang's pupils were yellowed, emanating a bloodred light, as he had already completely fallen to the dark side.

Beside Elder Wang was a black-robed old man, his hair white as snow and his face red as an infant's, yet not carrying the air of a sage at all as he had similarly completely fallen.

Shi Tie also recognised this man, a remnant Elder of Black Nightmare Mountain named Yang Nie.

Black Nightmare Mountain had had two late Essence Talisman Martial Grandmasters attack Broad Creed Mountain this time.

One of them had already been killed by Broad Creed Mountain's Grand Elder, the Transcending Mortality Martial Grandmaster Zhang Kun, with the Broad Creed Heavenly Palm.

Yang Nie, currently before Shi Tie, was the other.

The third person was the 'Scaly Dragon King' Sima Chui, who had clashed a few times with Shi Tie previously.

Elder Wang looked at Shi Tie, an indifferent look on his face, while Sima Chui's gaze fell on the wound on Shi Tie's chest, "Shi Tie, even if you are completely made of iron, how many more nails can be hammered in you now?"

Yan Nie looked coldly at Shi Tie, "Broad Creed Mountain will definitely be decimated today; no one will be able to prevent this!"

The terrifying pressure from the three late Essence Talisman Martial Grandmasters obscured the sky and covered the earth, virtually causing the very space to solidify.

One against three, Shi Tie's expression did not change in the slightest as he raised his arms calmly, brandishing his fists.

A voice that was firm as iron resounded between the heavens and the earth.

“Dream on!”

HSSB 298: The Berserk Lion Roars!

A bright light suddenly lit up between the heaven and the earth.

Countless spirit talismans flew, colliding with one another, extinguished in great numbers.

The remaining spirit talismans separated into four groups, forming a great amount of spirit arrays, after which they connected, four massive heavenly altars appearing within the air.

Shi Tie's body was enveloped by a golden altar, the altar shrinking unceasingly in size, becoming more and more condensed as well as vigorous, a true martial intent of unbreakable Vajra that could surpass all tribulations unscathed emanating from within.

Across from him, Elder Wang, Sima Chui and Yang Nie also established their heavenly altars.

One white, one black and one purple, the three heavenly altars suppressed the surrounding area.

The longtime Elder of Black Nightmare Mountain, Yang Nie, had a sabre appear within his hands, sabre-light not visible, only innumerable rotating storms visible as it was pitch black all around.

He was the first to attack Shi Tie, a most supreme martial art of Black Nightmare Mountain, the Great Western Purple Qi being

unleashed to its maximum.

A Purple Qi Heavenly Wave Sabre, with the momentum of splitting the heavens, carrying innumerable Black Nightmare Storms, chopped down towards Shi Tie!

Shi Tie's Profound Light Divine Armour lit up as not dodging or evading, he met Yang Nie's Great Western Purple Qi as wielded by his high-grade spirit artifact, the Light Nightmare Sabre, head-on.

As the two clashed head-on, infinite golden light and purple qi exploded and dispersed between the heavens and the earth, creating countless wild whirlwinds, madly sweeping the surrounding area.

Above Shi Tie, Elder Wang's figure appeared, a terrifying Heavenly Broad Creed Palm descending from the heavens!

The sky instantly seemed as though it had decreased in height!

Shi Tie exhaled and roared, exerting force with his right fist, forcibly jolting Yang Nie back as he simultaneously pushed up his left hand!

With the momentum of lifting the heavens, his left hand, bright as Vajra, blocked Elder Wang's Heavenly Broad Creed Palm.

Majestic as the heavens, the vigorous, tyrannical palm force pressured unceasingly downwards.

However, Shi Tie was like a pillar that supported the very heavens, not shaken in the least.

As their palms collided, a brilliant light shot out of Shi Tie's eyes, letting out a low roar as his left hand pushed upwards unceasingly, actually forcibly pushing the fallen, shortened heavens right back up!

Seeing this, Elder Wang and Yang Nie felt stunned.

One of Broad Creed Mountain's Three Supreme Arts, the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm, had actually been defeated by the Vajra Body of the Eight Extreme Arts?

It was not that the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm was inferior to the Vajra Body; it was that Shi Tie was stronger than Elder Wang!

The heavens wanted to collapse, but Shi Tie exerted force, shockingly raising the falling heavens back up again.

More terrifying was that not just was it lifting the heavens, as Shi Tie's power continued rising non-stop, the heavens actually seemed to have the momentum of overturning in another direction.

It was not the terrifying power of the Heavenly Broad Creed Palm overturning the heavens and the earth, but instead that Shi Tie wanted to flip these heavens around!

The white heavenly altar around Elder Wang shockingly began to topple, about to be overturned by Shi Tie from below!

Just at this time, a streak of dark light flashed past, resembling the sudden appearance of a strange black dragon, stabbing towards Shi Tie from a difficult angle!

The force was condensed, completely focused at a single point, forming an incomparably frightening destructive force, targeted straight towards the injury at Shi Tie's chest!

His gaze like lightning, Shi Tie punched out mightily with his right fist, repelling Yang Nie's Light Nightmare Sabre once more.

Retracting his left hand that was suppressing Elder Wang, his movements seemed slow, but were accurate as he slammed down with his fist, repelling Sima Chui's suddenly attacking lance!

Struck by Shi Tie on the neck, the strange black dragon let out a realistic cry of pain, as though its backbone had been broken.

After repelling Sima Chui's lance with his left fist, Shi Tie spread out his fingers, the movements of his hands light and relaxed as they slid slowly within the air.

A golden ring of light appeared, resembling Vajra, full and without flaws, completely empty within, as though it could tolerate all objects.

Sima Chui wanted to retract his lance and change his stance, but realised that the black dragon formed of his true martial intent in combination with his spirit artifact had been locked in place by that golden ring of light, actually unable to be retrieved.

Shi Tie exerted force with his left hand, that black dragon shrieking tragically as it had no way to escape, whilst also unceasingly absorbed and consumed by the golden ring of light.

The massive force drew Sima Chui's body closer and closer to Shi Tie against his will.

Either he released his grip and forsook his spirit artifact, or he would be pulled over by Shi Tie.

Shi Tie's upraised right hand that had already revealed its destructive power struck down towards Sima Chui!

As Sima Chui was unable to stabilise himself, Elder Wang and Yang Nie renewed their attacks, striking towards Shi Tie!

Yang Nie chopped out with his sabre, the entire horizon dyed purple as boundless strong gales of wind as well as wild tides surged simultaneously, engulfing the entire sky.

As his sabre descended, the entire purple sky seemed to have transformed alongside it into sabre-light, chopping towards Shi Tie.

Countless Black Nightmare Storms swept the purple sky, brutal and terrifying, as Shi Tie momentarily seemed to be located in the Great Western Desert.

On the other side, Elder Wang's palms slammed down once more!

Shi Tie's gaze was firm as a monolith as it did not waver in the least.

He completely merged with his golden heavenly altar, his entire person resembling Vajra, infinite light emanating outwards from his transparent body!

As the Profound Light Divine Armour on his body shone, he forcibly withstood Yang Nie's Purple Qi Heavenly Wave Sabre, his left hand not stopping as it pulled Sima Chui forward, before his right fist descended mightily, striking Sima Chui's chest head-on!

The black heavenly altar mightily shattered, blood spurting madly out of Sima Chui's mouth!

Shi Tie circulated his Vajra Body to the maximum, forcibly withstanding Yang Nie's sabre, before his body slightly moved, shifting away his vitals as he was now struck by Elder Wang's palm!

The Heavenly Broad Creed Palm, with its grand, boundless, vigorous, tyrannical power, caused Shi Tie's entire body to shake,

resembling the collapsing of a mountain.

Blood trickled slightly from the corners of Shi Tie's mouth.

Yang Nie roared furiously, "The Iron Lion King will become a dead lion today!"

His Great Western Purple Qi surged madly as the Light Nightmare Sabre within his hands completely transformed into a hurricane.

Innumerable terrifying gales of wind able to cleave the heavens and split the earth apart sliced across the horizon, frenziedly striking Shi Tie, leaving behind numerous tragic scars on the Profound Light Divine Armour and Shi Tie's body!

No fear could be seen within Shi Tie's gaze, nor did it waver, but something which had never appeared before in the past was now visible within.

Violence! Ferocity! Bloodthirstiness!

"I'll bury all of you here!"

"Even if it is using my own flesh, blood and bones!"

A berserk roar shook the nine heavens, as though a thoroughly enraged lion was roaring madly!

Shi Tie released Sima Chui's lance, intercrossing his fists as he collapsed Yang Nie's sabre-light, before his figure spun abruptly!

He strode forward, resembling a descended divinity as he arrived before Elder Wang!

The appearance of Vajra had disappeared from Shi Tie's body, other than on his fists, glowing incomparably brightly!

He punched out, forcibly dispersing Elder Wang's Heavenly Broad Creed Palm!

He punched out once more, directly shattering Elder Wang's heavenly altar!

Elder Wang stared, never having seen such a Vajra Body before.

This was completely having forsaken defence, forsaken the Vajra Body's essence of offence and defence both in one, completely concentrating all its power within his fists!

The past Vajra Body, indestructible and eternal!

The current Vajra Body, invincible in its attacks!

Having completely forsaken defence, Shi Tie forcibly withstood a full-powered sabre of Yang Nie's with his Profound Light Divine

Armour once more!

Unable to stand the burden, the Profound Light Divine Armour finally shattered mightily!

However, Shi Tie punched out once more, landing a heavy, mighty blow on Elder Wang's chest, as this past longtime Elder of Broad Creed Mountain had his chest collapse directly inwards!

As Shi Tie prepared to turn and deal with Yang Nie, a streak of dark light suddenly appeared once more!

The strange black dragon roared, mightily landing a direct hit on Shi Tie's old chest injury!

Shi Tie spat out a mouthful of fresh blood, his entire person pierced through by that lance!

The yellowed eyes of the 'Scaly Dragon King' Sima Chui emanated a bloodred light as he glared at Shi Tie.

Having always been plagued by devilish intent before, he had just completely fallen to the dark side, making use of this to greatly recover from the injuries Shi Tie had just inflicted on him, from this striking this fatal blow!

However, as his gaze met Shi Tie's, he could not help but shiver.

The berserk lion roared once more, his destructive fists descending from above with the momentum of ripping the very heavens apart, each landing respectively on the chests of Sima Chui and Yang Nie!

Blood spurted simultaneously from the mouths of the two late Essence Talisman Martial Grandmaster experts, staining the sky red!

HSSB 299: Definitely Won't Let You Destroy Broad Creed Mountain

Shi Tie struck out with his fists, other than Yang Nie, also heavily injuring Sima Chui who had just recovered some of his vitality to the point of spitting out blood once more!

However, his three opponents had also turned vicious as they howled madly, attacking Shi Tie once more, determined to slay him!

Yang Nie gave a cold shout, purple light surging madly from his entire body, transforming into countless strong gales of purple wind, lunging towards Shi Tie.

Sima Chui gripped his lance tightly, trapping Shi Tie's figure, shooting towards the great earth down below!

The struggling Elder Wang also lunged over!

"I definitely won't let you destroy Broad Creed Mountain!"

Shi Tie roared, his left hand parrying Elder Wang's palm as he punched out with his fist, directly blowing the brains of this senior apprentice-uncle of his who had fallen to the dark side into smithereens!

However, his figure was swept by Yang Nie's sabre-light.

The sky above him turned completely purple.

On the great earth beneath him, blazing heat reduced all the fertile soil within the surrounding five hundred kilometres into sand!

Between the heavens and the earth were violent black hurricanes that swept Shi Tie along, plummeting towards the great earth down below that had already transformed into a desert!

Shi Tie reached out abruptly, grabbing Yang Nie's sabre-wielding right hand, dragging him down alongside him.

Yang Nie did not evade it, unleashing his power to the maximum as countless streaks of purple light were infused into the great desert below.

Mournful radiance shone, transforming into countless purple spirit patterns, forming a brutal formation.

Then, dense streaks of purple light shot into the air, resembling innumerable sharp blades as they pierced into Shi Tie's back together.

Shi Tie seemed not to feel any pain at all as he raised his right fist, punching out towards Yang Nie!

His left hand grabbed by Shi Tie, Yang Nie could not evade, only able to watch on helplessly as Shi Tie's right fist punched onto his chest!

That destructive force completely agglomerated at one point, Shi Tie's fist resembled a famed divine artifact as it directly penetrated through Yang Nie's body!

His flesh and blood, internal organs, bones, everything, all shattered!

Yang Nie stared as fresh blood spurted out from his mouth, splashing onto Shi Tie's entire face.

The final late Essence Talisman Martial Grandmaster of Black Nightmare Mountain, slain in battle!

Slaying Yang Nie with a single punch, driven by the force of the lance within Sima Chui's hands, Shi Tie's plummeting figure also completely smashed into the desert down below.

That lance resembled a nail, pinning Shi Tie to the earth!

While Yang Nie was dead, that purple formation of light still served its final purpose, countless streams of purple light streaking upwards, resembling numerous purple chains as they entangled Shi Tie's body and that lance, imprisoning Shi Tie right where he was!

Of his three opponents, only Sima Chui still lived. He stood within the air, looking at Shi Tie, lying on the great earth down below.

At this moment, Shi Tie completely resembled a statue that was soon to shatter, dim and lustreless, mottled and broken.

Only his left fist still flickered with the light of Vajra.

Sima Chui opened his mouth, wanting to speak, but what emerged was first a mouthful of blood.

Injury inflicted upon injury, his situation was also tragic to the extreme.

“While injured, fighting one against three, still able to kill two,” Sima Chui coughed non-stop, but his gaze remained fixed on Shi Tie, “Surnamed Shi, you live up to the name of the Iron Lion King!”

Shi Tie’s face was expressionless as not speaking a word, he struggled, trying to stand.

However, those numerous purple chains trapped him tight.

Connected with those purple chains of light, that black lance that pierced through his body and nailed him to the ground erupted with an even more ferocious force.

It was fine when Shi Tie did not move, but as long as he tried to do so, his body was instantly struck by the impact.

Sima Chui's gaze landed on Shi Tie's left hand, "If I wanted to kill you now, it would be as easy as flipping my palm."

"However, I would first have to get near you."

"But if I do so, I know that you still have the strength for a final blow. If I were to kill you, I would be destined to die alongside you!"

An ashen look on his face, Sima Chui shook his head, raising his head to look at that tall mountain peak that rose into the clouds in the distance, "What exactly are you doing over there?"

"I don't know, and am also not interested. I just know that whatever you want to do, it'd be right for me to stop you from accomplishing it."

Whilst coughing blood, Sima Chui laughed with some difficulty, "If I kill you, you have the ability to bring me into death with you. If I don't kill you, I won't die, and while you also won't die, I can wreck your plans."

"And this might also not be your personal matter, instead concerning your entire Broad Creed Mountain. Hahahaha!"

The light within Shi Tie's gaze surged madly as he grabbed that black lance and tried to move it. However, the black and purple lights mightily struck his body together, imprisoning him, leaving him unable to move.

Sima Chui smiled, "Do it slowly; spending a bit more time on it, you should be able to break the formation, pulling out my Yin Dragon Lance. Although, you might not be fast as me ah."

Laughing loudly, Sima Chui flew towards that lone peak.

On the mountain peak, Xu Fei stood at the centre of the '天' character, hands raised towards the sky, palms facing upwards, as though lifting the heavens.

Beside him, Ying Longtu knelt down on one knee, hands pressing down on the '天' character together.

The golden hurricane that surrounded the two grew stronger and stronger, completely enveloping the lone peak, unceasingly sweeping the surrounding spiritual qi of the heavens and earth to be infused within.

Amidst their combined efforts, Xu Fei and Ying Longtu gazed nervously into the distance where a heaven-shocking, earth-shaking battle was currently unfolding.

Suddenly, following the many intense clashes, the battle suddenly seemed to come to a halt.

Then, a powerful aura shot over in the direction of Xu Fei and Ying Longtu.

When it had come near, Xu Fei's heart sunk to the very bottom, because he could tell that that was not that of his Master, Shi Tie!

Indeed, the figure of the 'Scaly Dragon King' Sima Chui appeared before the two.

Looking at the golden hurricane that enveloped the mountain peak, appraising it for a moment, Sima Chui chuckled.

Without his lance on him, he still punched out, his true essence transforming into a black scaly dragon, seeming firm and indestructible as it pierced towards the mountain peak!

Black light flickered as the scaly dragon left the sea, a violent, evil dragon's roar mixed in with the hurricane.

The black scaly dragon brandished its claws, frenziedly ripping at the golden hurricane.

Whilst being heavily injured, at the point of near death, Sima Chui's strength was still far from ordinary.

Under the attacks of the scaly dragon manifested from his true martial soul, the golden hurricane was instantly greatly

compromised.

The establishment of the ‘天’ character had also reached its final stage at this moment.

Above the lone peak, complicated, profound spirit patterns appeared, seeming like a greatly miniaturised version of Broad Creed Mountain’s guardian formation.

The spirit patterns combined with the ‘天’ character, countless streams of light expanding outwards into the distance.

Sima Chui gave a low shout, a violent power interfering with the golden hurricane, interfering with the ‘天’ character, causing the circulation of the ‘天’ character to slow.

The two sides temporarily descended into a stalemate.

Sima Chui grinned savagely, beginning to unleash his full strength, the golden hurricane gradually being ripped apart by his power!

His fist began nearing the lone peak. Not even having reached, the mountain peak began shaking intensely, as though about to collapse!

If the mountain peak collapsed, the ‘天’ character would immediately collapse as well!

On the mountain peak, Xu Fei and Ying Longtu stabilised the ‘天’ character with all their might, fighting against Sima Chui.

In the distance, within the great desert, Shi Tie’s face was expressionless as he grasped that black lance that pierced through his body.

“Creak...creak...”

Bit by creaking bit, Shi Tie drew that black lance out of his body!

Purple light and black light flickered intermittently.

Shi Tie’s skin burst, his flesh in shreds!

The body of that man who always seemed cast of iron was trembling unceasingly at this moment.

Only his hands were stable as a monolith.

HSSB 300: The Eternal Iron Lion King!

Shi Tie exerted force with his hands, the high-grade spirit artifact, the Yin Dragon Lance that pinned him to the ground being pulled out bit by bit.

Every inch that the Yin Dragon Lance was pulled outwards, Shi Tie's body suffered immense pain.

The lance worked in combination with the formation on the ground, together forming chains that trapped the lion!

These chains embedded themselves into his Shi Tie's flesh, every attempt of his to remove them reducing his flesh to bloodied shreds.

Shi Tie did not waver in the least, pulling out that lance with all his might.

However, as Sima Chui had said, this, was too slow!

While Shi Tie would still have combat power remaining after breaking free, Xu Fei and Ying Longtu could not wait much longer!

Beneath the lone peak, Sima Chui's strength grew, even beginning to penetrate through the golden hurricane, attacking towards Xu Fei and Ying Longtu!

Countless forces that resembled Black Scaly Dragons viciously lunged towards the ‘天’ character and the two on the mountain peak!

The difference in the cultivation bases of the two sides was just too large. Even heavily injured, Sima Chui was not someone that they could withstand. Xu Fei knew this full well, but his face was without fear as he resolutely guarded Ying Longtu behind him.

The only thing that tugged at Xu Fei’s heart was that if the mountain peak beneath them was shaken, the ‘天’ talisman would be compromised!

With the heaven, earth, human technique unable to be set in place, they would be unable to wrest back control of the Clear Qi Grand Formation from Xin Dongping!

Outside, there were still strong enemies of the Sacred Sun Clan and the Heavenly Thunder Hall soon coming to assault.

Broad Creed Mountain would be in grave danger!

Ying Longtu asked uncomprehendingly, “Senior apprentice-brother, where’s Master?”

Before his words had fallen, a majestic roar of a lion resounded in the distance!

Beneath the mountain peak, Sima Chui looked back in surprise,

his gaze piercing through space to land on that great desert.

Pinned to the ground by the Yin Dragon Lance, Shi Tie gripped its shaft with his right hand, raising his left hand high!

Shi Tie clenched his left hand, a bright light condensing, illuminating the surrounding heavens and earth!

The next moment, a destructive force was unleashed from Shi Tie's left fist, mightily punching onto the shaft of the Yin Dragon Lance!

A sound like muffled thunder resounded, the high-grade spirit artifact, the Yin Dragon Lance, being forcibly snapped by Shi Tie!

As the Yin Dragon Lance broke, the purple chains of light and the black hurricanes were no longer able to entangle and restrict Shi Tie's body.

However, a violent backlash now completely erupted, shocking Shi Tie's body!

Shi Tie spoke not as he arose.

Creak...

Creak...

The piercing sound of friction rose between the broken lance shaft and his body once more, shocking one's soul.

Sima Chui looked at Shi Tie with a disbelieving expression on his face, "You're mad! This way, you're doomed for sure!"

With Shi Tie as its centre, a great wind blew through the great desert.

Sand and dust flew as Shi Tie's body stood up straight once more.

Resembling an eternal divine statue-even if it was shattered, even if it was crooked, it would still stand tall once more in the end!

Shi Tie grabbed the half-shaft of the Yin Dragon Lance, his gaze like a tiger's as he abruptly flung it in the direction of Sima Chui!

The half-lance of the Yin Dragon Lance formed a streak of black lightning, shooting madly towards Sima Chui!

Sima Chui wanted to evade it, yet found that whilst contesting with the '天' character and the golden hurricane, he was also locked in place by their suction force!

Unable to move, Sima Chui had on a look of utter despair, only able to use a hand to block that incoming black light!

"Bang!"

The black light erupted with a shocking glow, firm as Vajra, bright as shooting stars.

Sima Chui's arm directly shattered, and what followed was his body!

Shattered, shattered, shattered again, finally bursting mightily into pieces!

The last of the three late Essence Talisman Martial Grandmasters, the 'Scaly Dragon King' Sima Chui, was slain by the Iron Lion King Shi Tie on the spot!

Having lost the interference by Sima Chui, the golden hurricane returned to normal, its power being circulated to the maximum.

The '天' character combined completely with the spirit patterns above the mountain peak, countless formless streams of qi extending, merging with Broad Creed Mountain's Clear Qi Grand Formation!

Of heaven, earth and human, the final heaven position was finally established.

Seeing the '天' character finally completely established, Xu Fei did not think about anything as he just rushed down the mountain towards Shi Tie, Ying Longtu following closely behind him.

In the distant desert, on the great earth, a single figure stood, resembling a mottled statue.

That statue was riddled with cracks all round, full of injuries, mottled and broken, as though it had stood through countless winds and rains.

However, it stood eternally tall, resembling a pillar that held up the very sky.

Xu Fei's expression was sorrowful as he knelt before this figure, silent.

Shi Tie opened his eyes, raising his head to look towards the sky with great difficulty.

Countless streams of light shot past him one after another, shooting over in the direction of Broad Creed Mountain.

Shi Tie wanted to turn his head to look towards Broad Creed Mountain, but he was already unable to do so.

Yet, some scenes still surfaced before his eyes, they that existed at the depths of his memories, engraved within his very soul, bringing him back to days long past.

His parents had died early, with him diligently living on a difficult life.

One day, a middle-aged man had appeared before him, smiling as he had asked whether he was willing to learn martial arts from him.

That was his Master, Yuan Zhengfeng, currently in secluded cultivation in Broad Creed Mountain's back mountains, similarly giving it his all for Broad Creed Mountain.

His master then had been in the prime of his youth, not appearing old, just like he himself had been earlier...

The scene changed. He was cultivating diligently when his Master brought a child back to the clan, just like how he had brought him back that year.

That child was still young, but his gaze was deep and calm, seemingly mature as an adult.

That was his second apprentice-brother Fang Zhun, currently suppressing the Devilish Domain Grand Formation in the back mountains, preventing the Nine Underworlds from descending into this world.

After that, his Master had continuously brought back some children, all becoming his junior apprentices. Sometimes, he still had to instruct and guide them on behalf of his Master.

One of them was a little girl, a daughter of a late senior

apprentice-uncle, spoilt greatly by his Master to the point of lawlessness, even his Master feeling headaches over her later on.

It was only when he stiffened up his face that the girl would feel scared, sticking out her tongue as she fearfully quietened down.

That was junior apprentice-sister Fu.

Finally, when he had already become of age, famed across the world, his Master who had already come to appear old had brought back a youth, saying that this was a junior apprentice-brother, his closed door, final disciple.

At a young age, he was already shining with talent, spiritedly striving for greater heights.

That was Yan Di, currently in a life and death battle with Yuan Tian and Xin Dongping in the Clear Qi Grand Formation.

Other than them, there were still many fellow disciples, some still here, some already not.

The old died, but new blood was infused.

Such as his favoured disciples Xu Fei and Ying Longtu here.

Similarly fighting for the future of Broad Creed Mountain, Yan Zhaoge, Feng Yunsheng, Sikong Qing and others...

The scenes changed unceasingly, finally slowing.

His wife had been injured during her pregnancy. She had endured and given birth, but died soon after.

The only thing that comforted him was the gradual growth of his son, growing from a lively young body to an intelligent youth, and finally an upright young man, his life's pride.

Soon, his son had also married and borne a child.

Before that, he had also not thought that he would be able to enjoy the later part of his life like this, enjoying great familial joy, in the happiest times of his life.

His daughter-in-law Ying Yuzhen carried his grandson Shi Jun, standing by Shi Songtao's side, the family of three all smiling as they looked over.

Little Shi Jun extended his chubby little pair of hands towards him...

The scenes within Shi Tie's mind finally stopped here.

In the distance, at the lone peak where the '天' character was, that golden hurricane led the spiritual qi agglomerated from all around to combine with the Clear Qi Grand Formation.

Within the sky, countless spirit patterns lit up, the Clear Qi Grand Formation being shaken once more!

This meant that the earth and human positions had both already been established.

The three connected; the Clear Qi Grand Formation changed once more!

Shi Tie smiled slightly, slowly closing his eyes.